



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



DELTA COMPANY, 229TH AVN BN, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION  
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM LATE 1965

*Taken in Vietnam in late 1965, this photo shows the "Smiling Tigers", the men of the 110th Aerial Weapons Company of the 229th Aviation Battalion. The "Smiling Tigers" stayed active and attached to the 1st Cavalry Division from deployment until the Division's stand down and deactivation at the end of the Vietnam War. The story of this photo runs on page 9 of this, our September and October 2013 edition of the VHPA Aviator.*

## IN THIS ISSUE

F Troop pilots return to Vietnam.....	10
The Undercover Warrant.....	21
Welcome to the VHPA.....	22
Letters to the Editor .....	26

Looking For .....	27
TAPS.....	29
VHPA Chapter Activities.....	35
2012 Reunion Recap.....	44

## VHPA MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES STRONG GROWTH

Membership in VHPA has increased by 441 since the last Reunion in New Orleans, we had hoped for 500 new guys but we ran out of time. The good news is we added more members than we lost in the Taps Section, that's a trend to be appreciated.

As stated before, the military trained over 54,000 helicopter pilots between 1952 and 1973, of that number over 44,000 served one or more tours in Vietnam and SE Asia. So, we still have a potential base of over 25,000 helicopter pilots left that are eligible to join VHPA. The Membership Committee needs your help to get them in VHPA and personal contact is the best way to get a guy to join VHPA.

A potential member doesn't know Mike Sheuerman but he does know a guy from his Flight Class, he remembers a guy that flew in his Unit in Vietnam or the guy he served with when he returned from Vietnam. He needs to hear from you.

Here is what we need from you. We want you to volunteer to contact guys from your Flight Class, or the guys from your Vietnam Unit, or the guys you served with after you came home or maybe the guys that live in your home town. The Membership Committee will supply names and contact information on whatever group of men you want to help with. Just give me a call and let me know what you want to work on.

This idea was discussed at the business meeting in San Francisco and fifteen to twenty guys came up and offered to help with this idea. Many gave me cards and notes and I really appreciate it. If I haven't been in contact with you please understand I'm just now getting back to HQ after a busy three weeks. Call me if I haven't called you.

Our goals for the next ABM (Annual Business Meeting) in Louisville is to sign up another 750 new members and get 750 non-current members to re-join. We need your help and personal contact from members they know is the key.

*Thanks in advance for your help,*

*Mike Sheuerman, Membership Chairman*

**Phone 1-800-505-8472, E-Mail [Membership @vhpa.org](mailto:Membership@vhpa.org), Cell phone [REDACTED] or home e-mail: [REDACTED]**

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[Aviator@vhpa.org](mailto:Aviator@vhpa.org)**

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## VHPA SCHOLARSHIPS TO INCREASE TO \$2,000 EACH

2013, has been a banner year for the VHPA Scholarship program. Starting this year, we have doubled the five VHPA Merit scholarships that are administered through AAAA, from \$1000.00 to \$2,000.00 per-year. This was made possible by the over \$5,000.00 in interest earned by the \$125,000.00+ on deposit corpus VHPA has on account with AAAA, a decision recommended by the Scholarship Committee and approved by the Executive Council.

From this Reunion forward, our goal is to have all the scholarship donations received by VHPA from Reunion attendee registrations, monies donated from specific events at the Reunion and donations from the famous "passing of the Cav hats" at the Annual Business Meeting will be divided in such a manner as to not only add to our funds on account with AAAA, but also to increase our five annual awards by at least \$1,000.00 every year. This year over \$16,000.00 was raised at such events; over \$5,000 through registration and \$480.00 from Reunion events. But the big push was when one member pledged to match, dollar for dollar up to \$10,000.00 dollars, all pledges we received when we "Passed the Cav Hat" at this year's Annual Business Meeting. When it was all over, \$5,259.00 was placed in the Cav Hat and that one member, who wishes to remain unnamed, matched it with a check for \$5,500.00!

Please make sure your kids, grandkids, great-grandkids, etc., apply for these scholarship awards, the application deadline is May 1 of each year. These are MERIT scholarships and are not based on need, our applicants continually get about 10% of ALL the AAAA scholarships, grants and loans given out. In 2012, that VHPA had 38 applicants and received 20 awards totaling \$23,500.00. This is a win-win program for VHPA and our descendants.

Our scholarship corpus can always use more donations. If you feel the need to contribute, and I hope you will, please send your donations to VHPA Scholarship Fund care of VHPA HQ. Thanks in advance for your commitment to the legacy of VHPA!!

*Tom Payne, Scholarship Chairman*

## FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

Well, R2013 has come and gone! We certainly hope that everyone that attended enjoyed themselves. We do have a few reunion t-shirts left. If anyone is interested, call HQ to see if we have your size available. We also have HFP DVD's available if anyone is interested in purchasing one.

Now it is time to get back to normal business. So....be sure to contact us if there is a change in any of your contact information. If the database does not get updated with that info - you don't receive your newsletter or any other info that may be mailed out during the year.

As always, our goal is to make VHPA the best it can be for you, the members! If there is anything that we can do to make that happen, PLEASE LET US KNOW!

*Sherry Rodgers  
VHPA Office Manager*

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[www.VHPA.org](http://www.VHPA.org)

*From (2841)*  
**Bill "Moon" Mullen,**  
**President**  
**of the VHPA**



### "WHERE IN THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN"?

Each year at the reunion we have an event where we welcome members that are attending their first reunion, in San Francisco we had a record 51 members attending their first reunion. The Executive Council forms a receiving line and I always welcome the new guys with a handshake and this year I also asked "Where the hell have you been for the last 29 years"?

For 30 years now everyone has been trying to convince members to attend a reunion. We have approximately 9,000 members and our best guess is that 60% have never attended a Reunion, that's over 5,000 members. So - why in the world do we continue to try to get members to attend?

First, these reasons ARE NOT TRUE.....the Executive Council gets a bonus if they make their goal.....the hotel gives the Executive Council free points based on the number of attendees.....Moon wants to beat the best attended reunion ever....Washington DC in 2006 where we had 2537 attendees. Come to think of it, I would like to break that record! The truthful reason we keep trying is we don't want you to miss the experience.

I passed out a survey so first timers could share with you in their own words their thoughts about coming to their first reunion. Here is a sampling of responses.....The food, entertainment, tours and people attending was awesome! .....Best day I've had since I left country on 15 April 1970..... My first reunion provided me with a warmth I have not felt in over 40 years.....Impressive how organized everything was, see you in Louisville!.....The best!.....Awesome and fulfilling, I'm there next year.....Now I'm really motivated not to miss another one, Thanks !!!.....Wow, Wow and more Wow!....Outstanding, should have attended years ago. Although I did not see any guys from my unit, I found common ground among everyone I met.....It was like in the 60's sitting in the hooch, drinking a cold one, talking about that day's missions, laughing and sharing stories. The only difference was we were not in the hooch, we were in the "O Club" in SF. Thanks for all your hard work!.....I missed 29 years and I cannot go back, but I can damn well make sure I don't miss anymore.

Louisville is easily accessible, especially by auto. A wonderful interstate road system leads to Louisville. I talked to many members that are going to attend in 2014 and they are going to drive. We have negotiated free parking at the hotel. How often have you stayed at a hotel and not paid for parking?

If you want to attend, but don't have a ride, contact me and I will try to connect you with a member driving by your place.

Stop the presses....just received a late arriving email from a first timer....my wife and I did not get together until after my time in the military and she was not too sure she would enjoy a get together with a bunch of Nam Helicopter pilots. Well she thoroughly did enjoy the events and the wonderful people. My first VHPA Reunion was beyond expectations! We both had a fabulous time.

To everyone that has never attended, give it a try! I got 27 responses from 51 men. They were all positive and they were all glad they attended. I hope to see you in Louisville!

*I am PROUD to be one of us! Welcome Home, God Bless  
You and God Bless the United States of America.*

*Let me know how we are doing....  
Moon*

*E-Mail:* [REDACTED]

## I'm a Vietnam Veteran, that's what I am

By LTC (Ret.) Donald E. Long

I'm a Vietnam Veteran, that's what I am  
I did my best for my Uncle Sam.  
While doing my best, I made it through,  
But others, America, have died for you.

You don't know the hurt, don't know the pain,  
That when I came back, things weren't the same.  
And you also don't know the joy inside  
For the job I did, I have such pride.

The sad thing is, not everyone was there  
To see me fight with rules "unfair";  
To see my love for my fellow man;  
To see my sacrifice in the air, jungle, and sand.

I didn't run to Canada, or try to hide.  
It wasn't my horse but I had to ride.  
I had a family, friends and others to protect.  
If you tried to understand, I'd get more respect.

I don't expect you to know how I feel.  
You got your knowledge from a TV reel.  
You don't know that the truth about the war  
Is better learned from those who went ashore.

It doesn't matter that history is wrong.  
It matters that I can still sing my song  
Of pride...and joy...for my Uncle Sam.  
I'm a Vietnam Veteran, that's what I am.

It's too bad congress, newsmen and such  
Weren't concerned enough to want to touch  
My soul while I was passing the test.  
Instead they thought "what makes me look best?"

But I don't concern myself with them  
Whose ignorance and selfishness still wear thin.  
Instead I think now of what to do  
To continue to glorify old "red, white and blue".

If you should ask me "how it was over there?"  
I'd reply "the public, over here, was very unfair".  
I'd also say our politicians blew it.  
They confused Chicago with Ban Me Thuot.

These things can't hurt me now my brother.  
I understand and will soon help another  
To love those words that sound so grand,  
"I'm a Vietnam Veteran, that's what I am",  
"I'm a Vietnam Veteran....that's what I am".

*The above was sent to us by (Ret.) LTC Donald E. Long. It was originally part of a speech he made at a reunion of the 14th Avn. Bn. in the early 1990's. "I wrote the poem and read it at the end of the speech. It went over extremely well and I believe the speech and poem did make the men there that day feel better. Hopefully, this poem can also make one or two more of our Members feel good about their lives."*

LTC Long served in Vietnam with both the 176th Avn Co and the 161st Avn Co of the 14th Avn Bn. He also served as the Bn Ops Officer for the 123rd Avn Bn and later as commander of B Co (Aeroscout), 123rd Avn Bn, 16th Avn Gp, Americal Division.

He may be reached at: [REDACTED]

## UPCOMING REUNIONS

### OV-1 MOHAWK ASSOCIATION

#### 24TH ANNUAL REUNION AND FLY IN.

5-7 September, Hilton hotel, Savanna, Georgia

POC is Paul Jacobsen, [REDACTED] or e-mail: [REDACTED]

See also: [WWW.OV-1MohawkAssociation.Org](http://WWW.OV-1MohawkAssociation.Org)

### BOXCAR-HERCULES ASSOCIATION REUNION 2013

11-14 September, Branson Towers hotel, Branson, Missouri

POC is Bill McRae, Herc 18 (70-71)

(E-Mail) [REDACTED] (Phone) [REDACTED]

See also: [132ASHC.org](http://132ASHC.org)

### THE FIRST ANNUAL LAST REUNION OF THE 170TH AHC,

#### VIETNAM 1965-71, "THE BIKINIS"

All 52nd Aviation Battalion veterans are invited.

September 26-29, 2013 in St Louis, MO

POC- Henry Winther, [REDACTED] or [170th.org](http://170th.org)

### BIRDDOG - 221ST AVIATION COMPANY (SHOTGUNS)

### AND THE 119TH RECON AIRPLANE CO (SWAMP FOX)

Sept 26-29, League City, TX.

POC: Don Smith, [REDACTED]

or Norm Wood, [REDACTED]

[www.221st.org](http://www.221st.org)

### ALL WHO SERVED WITH THE 187TH ASSAULT

#### HELICOPTER COMPANY

#### BLACKHAWKS - CRUSADERS - RAT PACK

November 7 - 11, Orleans Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada

POC: John T. Wilson; Email: [REDACTED]

<http://www.187thahc.net>

Want to see your Reunion publicized here?

Send details to: [Aviator@VHPA.org](mailto:Aviator@VHPA.org)

# Vietnam: the American Helicopter War and its Legacy, a visit to the US Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker

by Dan Petrosky, LTG, Ret.



Our legacy lives inside our families, with the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA), and with AAAA. It lives inside the books that some have written and the abundance of media reports. Our legacy and legend can be found in some form in all of these places. However, our culture is defined in the Army Aviation museum at Fort Rucker.

Our Army Aviation museum is all about where the past and future generations of helicopter enthusiasts can go to learn about the magnificent Vietnam era helicopter fleet and what that brought to today's Army Resident in our museum you will find how the fleet was developed, who tested them, and who flew them in combat? In short it tells the history lesson of how our Nation understood the value the helicopter would bring to the ground commander's operations.

We are fortunate to have such a museum. I say fortunate because museums just don't happen. They take a vision and lots of hard work to become truly representative of a culture. The Army Aviation museum is a world class museum and as such it is the number one free attraction in Alabama. Which means it gets a lot of visitors; over 100,000 each year.

Each truly great museum has a foundation consisting mostly of volunteers that can provide support beyond what, in our case, the Army can't furnish. The Foundation can put together the needed funding to build the structure, and then continue to provide monetary and volunteer support.

Our Museum Foundation also provides the structure for volunteers to give back to Army Aviation. Many of these volunteers are Vietnam Helicopter veterans. They function as expert docents, and work the myriad of museum processes. The volunteers teach and explain our legacy and culture to the numerous school classes and museum visitors.

We are fortunate that our Army Aviation Museum is on Fort Rucker, at the home of Army Aviation. We are all grateful for the men and women



that took on the task of bringing the matching civilian funds necessary to construct our museum.

Our Museum provides more than just history. It explains and defines our culture. It will ignite and spark the interest and passion for future vertical lift aerospace engineer students, and aviators. It will continue your legacy.

The museum transformation to education. Many of the displays now can be accessed by smart phones or museum devices that teach the history of each collection. Both the Museum Foundation and AAAA have been solid partners in this endeavor.

We are currently in the process of upgrading the museum entrance in a way that recognizes the men and women of Army Aviation past and present. The engraved brick pavers that will be placed at the entrance to the Museum are designed to provide a venue for Army aviation soldiers and civilians to have their family name and their personal legacy included in this magnificent National Treasure.

We must continue the mission. I urge you to visit your museum. Consider having a brick placed at the entrance to honor an aviation family member. We have always been fortunate to have the finest crew chiefs, mechanics, fuel handlers, ammunition specialists, government and Industry civilians, and of course pilots. Each one deserves his or her name in the museum. The Museum Brick Paver Program is designed to do that. Information is available on line.

Take the time now to reflect on all you and each generation of Army Aviation Soldiers have accomplished. If you have the time become a museum Foundation volunteer. Visit your museum in person and on line at [www.armyaviationmuseum.org](http://www.armyaviationmuseum.org).

LTG Dan Petrosky USA Retired, Griffin 33 Vietnam 4/77th ARA and VHPA Member is the current Chairman of the Army Aviation Museum Foundation

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# What's your legacy?

**leg-acy:** Noun An amount of money or property left to someone in a will.  
Synonyms: Heritage - inheritance

By Steve Bookout, Razorback 33

In all probability, you flew with the best bunch of aviators in Vietnam. You also had the hardest working company in your Battalion. You were proud of your call sign. When the going got rough, you got going. You guys were badass and all the other aviation units KNEW you guys were badass dudes. Your reunions or get together's are filled with memories and when the "Now this ain't no shit" stories start flowing, it's obvious that every one of you are proud of what you did. Am I right in my assumptions? Sadly, unless your unit made history books for some really outstanding/unusual mission, most folks never even know you existed.

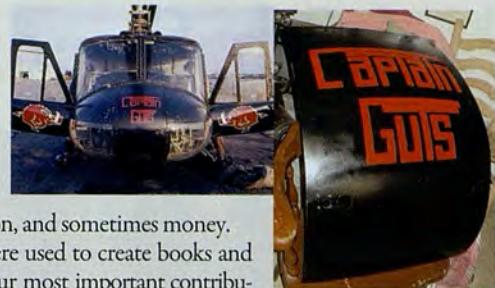
I'm proud of the units I flew with and would feel somewhat saddened if what we went through, who we lost, what I did myself was swept under the rug. I have this distinct desire for my descendants to know what Grandpa did in his war. While musing over all the above, another brain cramp (*déjà vu* or bad Karma?) came my way and it seemed pretty easy to do. There are myriad of things you can do and far too many to mention here, so let me give you some ideas about we did to help preserve our unique history.

First and foremost, enlist the assistance/support of the guys in your group. No doubt they will come up with some neat things not mentioned here. Perhaps they have certain skills that will come in handy. Second, decide what you are going to do. Third, decide how you are going to go about it and get it completed. For example: Broken shards of greenhouse Plexiglas were obtained from a Huey that actually served in Vietnam. Actual size dog tags were made from this material and engraved with the member's name, rank, years in the Nam, call sign, and etc. These were sold amongst ourselves to raise capital for other projects.

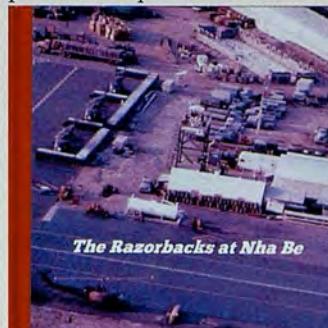
Old brass US belt buckles were engraved with call signs for the same purpose as the dog tags.

A call for photos went out. These were used to replicate distinctive aircraft components like our platoon had them in Vietnam. The parts we've

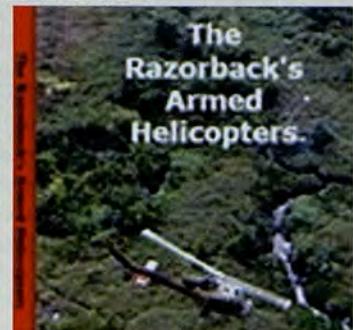
completed are on display across the US and even in England. These projects took quite a considerable amount of time, effort, documentation, and sometimes money.



Other photos were used to create books and these are probably our most important contribution to telling the world that we did something and are proud of it. Hard backed photo books are very easy to create and minimal wording is necessary. They can also be had pretty inexpensively. Our first endeavor was a photo book that depicts the guys at Nha Be. It was so popular that a second volume to show additional platoon members is almost completed. Another volume is being worked on to contain members that flew in the unit's early days. One book concerns the helicopters we flew during our tours. Yet still another is filled with photos of one specific bird. Their front covers are below.



The  
Razorback's  
Armed  
Helicopters.



We have DVDs of our home movies and cockpit chatter. Maintenance TMs were scanned and made into DVDs. Ditto the Tactical Air-drome Directory. Kinda cool looking up the freqs of say Quang Tri, Tan Son Nhut, or Soc Trang.

We obtained the non-copyrighted US government films made of us during the late hostilities and put together our own Hollywood production onto DVDs so that we have something to watch on TV and these reruns never get old or boring. I could go on and on, but I believe that you get the main idea and I hope food for thought.

*Now ask yourself: what are you going to do to preserve your legacy?*

Cheers,

Steve Bookout

E-Mail: [REDACTED]



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# 46th Special Forces Company



In the early years of the war in Vietnam the United States had many allies. Thailand was one of those valued allies that had troops in country to help fight the communists. The Thais had lived as peaceful neighbors of the Vietnamese for centuries, but during the 1960s and 1970s the struggle to keep the Communist out of that part of Southeast Asia became a major world issue. Thailand feared the fall of Cambodia and Laos to guerrillas, and wanted above all else to safeguard their independence. The 46th Special Forces Company assisted Thai forces in resisting Communist guerrilla activity along the Laotian border and in the south on the Malay Peninsula.

The origin of the 46th Special Forces Company was D Company, 1st Special Forces Group which was activated 15 April, 1967 in Thailand. In 1968, the 46th Special Forces Company was headquartered southeast of Lopburi at Camp Pawai. Later, in 1971 the 46th SF Company (which was considerably larger than a standard company) relocated to the Royal Thai Army (RTA) Special Warfare Center at Ft. Narai, Lopburi. As the 46th Special Forces received its own aviation assets, those aircraft would be located at the Pawai Airfield.

The 46th Special Forces Company conducted specialized SF training (Advanced Ranger/LRRP and radio communications' courses) at the Royal Thai Army (RTA) Special Warfare Center, Ft. Narai, Lopburi province. Additional Guerrilla and Commando skills were taught by instructors from the Royal Thai Army Special Forces (RTSF) and Royal Thai Police Aerial Resupply Unit (PARU) at the Phitsanulok training camp.

Originally the 46th Special Forces Company did not have its own aviation assets. Aviation support was provided by the 7th Airlift Platoon which organized at Fort Riley, Kansas 1967 as a classified unit designated as P001, later redesigned the 7th Airlift Platoon" (Provisional), call sign "Snow White". The unit was deployed to Thailand in February, 1968 and based at Camp Friendship adjacent to Korat Air Force Base.

By the time the 7th Airlift Platoon arrived in Thailand, the 70th Aviation Detachment was already in place at Camp Friendship. At that time the 70th had a mix of aircraft, one U-21, two Beavers, one Otter, two UH-1Cs, two UH-1Ds and an OH-23. The 7th brought with them eight brand new UH-1Hs: 17095, 17099, 17103, 17107, 17111, 17115, 17119 and 17123. They provided direct support for the 46th Special Forces Company and USARSUPTHAI. The 70th Avn Detachment provided heavy maintenance support for the 7th, and subsequently, the 46th Special Forces after these aviation assets were reorganized.

In February, 1969, the 7th Airlift Platoon had completed its mission and prepared for deactivation. Its air-

By William C. Thompson

craft were reassigned to other Army Aviation units in Southeast Asia and CONUS. Four aircraft were assigned to the 70th Aviation Detachment supporting JUSMAG Thailand. That unit was relocated to Bangkok and had trimmed its fleet to U-21s and UH-1Hs.

Some of the 7th Airlift pilots along with two UH-1Hs (17099 and 368) were assigned to the 46th Special Forces Company, call sign "Cobra", under section commander, CPT Wheeler, based at the airstrip at Camp Pawai. His command was followed by CPT James Hannon in 1971, CPT William Thompson, 1972, and CPT Bill Bethea in 1973.

Some of the other aviators assigned to the 46th Special Forces



(CPT William Thompson, 1972)

Aviation Section between March, 1972 and March, 1973 were as follows: CW2 Jerry D Wood, Maintenance Officer, CW2 Robert Whittaker, pilot, CW2 Pete Henry, pilot, CW2 Carroll A. Vaughan, instructor pilot, WO1 Wesley, pilot, WO1 Gary Bingham, pilot.

The Aviation Section was under the operational control of the S-3, Operations Officer Major Munson. The missions performed by the Aviation Section of the 46th SF varied widely. They included, but were not limited to: VIP transport, USO transport, Pro Course [Special Forces Proficiency Course] support, LRRP Training Support, insertions and extractions, Photo missions, Support missions for the Thai Royal Border Patrol, Jumpmaster training mission support, E&E training support, McQuire Rig and Repelling missions, Metropop (high altitude joint parachuting competitions with civilian and military personnel), MedCap-Civil Affairs support flights throughout Thailand and adjacent borders, Company-wide Para drop proficiency training, HALO jump support, Low-Level Para drop support, Tactical and administrative transport of HHC personnel throughout Thailand, Logistic transport for outlying training locations, and medical evacuation of patients to 5th Field Hospital in Bangkok. The unit also supported some of the transportation requirements of the Commander's Thai counterpart, Col. Tinchi who was the Commander of the Thai Special Warfare Center and was also a rotary wing aviator. Several decades later Col. Tinchi became the Minister of Defense for Thailand.



Konchenoburi, "Bridge over the River Kwai"

46th SF detachments were located for various periods at: Camp Carrow (Trang), Chonburi, Kokethiem, Saraburi, Ratburi, Fort Narai (Lopburi), Kanchanaburi, Huahin, Bangkok, Udorn, Ubon, Nakhon Phanom, Mai Rem, Songkhla, Pranburi, Phitsanulok, Nam Phong, Chieng Kham, Ban Nong Saeng, Ban Haui Khu, Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Nan, Ban Haui Sai Tai, Muang Loi and Samae San. At most locations aviation support was an essential element to sustain the mission.

46th Special Forces Company Continued on Page 40





This photo was taken in Vietnam in late 1965 and it shows the "Smiling Tigers", the men of the 110th Aerial Weapons Company of the 229th Aviation Bn., who later became D/229 AVN BN., 1st CAV. DIV. (AM). The "Smiling Tigers" stayed active and attached to the 1st Cav Division from deployment until stand down and deactivation of the 1st Cav Division at the end of the Vietnam War.

The unit started with an emblem of a tiger with a machine gun over its shoulder and the motto "Put a Tiger on Your Flank". The final version of the "Smiling Tiger" unit emblem was designed by Walt Disney Studios who sold it to the US Army, along with all legal rights, for the "sum of \$1.00 and other valuable services". The new emblem, and the callsign "Smiling Tigers" remained unchanged throughout the rest of the Vietnam War.



## Western Museum of Flight

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November 16, 2013 – 11:00 AM

## The Vietnam Air War

### Col Marv Garrison, USMC

If you want to get the Big Picture, a good way to start might be to hear from someone who had a hawk's eye view of the subject. This qualification certainly describes this month's celebrity guest speaker, Colonel Marv Garrison, USMC. In addition to flying a wide variety of aircraft, in a wide variety of theaters, Col. Garrison held one of the most influential jobs in American air operations during the Vietnam conflict. As chief of the fighter section for the 7th Air Force in Vietnam, Col. Garrison certainly had a hawk's eye view.



Col. M.T. Garrison  
USMC



preparing the daily plans for strikes into North Vietnam and elsewhere, as well as coordinating peripheral operations. Most of those who have served in the Vietnam conflict freely acknowledge that they had only a limited view of the entire complex of operations in the whole theater. Col. Garrison had one of those rare - and, by his own admission - lucky opportunities to see, and participate, in a wide range of operations, throughout the theater. This should prove to be a fascinating and enlightening presentation, so be sure to join us.

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[www.wmof.com](http://www.wmof.com)

The hard-copy of the photo belongs to one of our newer VHPA members, Mr. James "Jim" Ervi Sr. of Salado, Texas who thought that it would be nice to share it with both his fellow Smiling Tigers and the members of the VHPA. So, earlier this year Jim sent the picture over to Marc Grimm, Smiling Tiger 36 during the 1968-69 time frame.

Marc then spent a great deal of time tracking down all the names and doing the photo's labeling and touch-up editing. Marc maintains the D/229 member's roster, which has about 400 names on it, where he attempts to track past members, keep up to date on who passes, put people in touch with one another, and collect the odd historical item that are unearthed from time to time. Marc went on to say that "I am from a much later period in the Vietnam Smiling Tiger's history but have a great respect for the early pilots, crews, and support troopers who built the airmobile and gunship concepts to what they ultimately became". "Besides", he continued.... "I thought a lot of folks might be interested in getting a look at where Army attack aviation started. Well at least until the uniforms started falling apart from the jungle rot in the first monsoon."

Once Marc's work was done, he and Jim sent the photo out to all the other members of D/229 that Marc maintains contact with. Finally, Jim Ervi sent a copy of the photo to us here at the Aviator thinking that we might enjoy sharing it with the Membership. Jim let me know that "I've had people fussing after me to join the Association (VHPA) for years, but I finally just joined three months ago. I am a Korean War Veteran and also flew two tours in Vietnam." "I certainly don't eat and sleep those days but I really enjoy our Aviator, reading about other people and checking up on my old aviator friends."

Jim Ervi may be reached at: [REDACTED]

Marc Grimm may be reached at: [REDACTED]

And how about all of our other new members? Do you have anything to share with the membership? If so let me know about it and I'll see what I can do to help.

David Adams, Editor of the VHPA Aviator  
E-Mail: [Aviator@VHPA.org](mailto:Aviator@VHPA.org) or phone [REDACTED]



# RETURN TO VIETNAM



Bruce McKenty, Mike Syverson, Doug Madigan, Dick Hanscom, Chris Sautter, Bob Monette

watch the evening news relate recent efforts to combat terrorism. Certainly, as we see uniformed men and women in airports today, we recall our own lonely flight as we first deployed to Viet Nam in the 60's as Huey, Cobra, OH-6 and Chinook drivers. Hopefully, today's young volunteer soldiers will build the same friendships, trust, and unity that served us during our time spent in harm's way. Our bond was sealed long before our boots hit the ground. In many cases, that brotherhood has only grown and strengthened over the 40+ years since our first meeting.

In February 2012, that brotherhood that allowed six troopers, three wives, and two fellow travelers to make the rewarding trip back to Viet Nam. Our group was comprised of: Mike Syverson (Perch) and wife Janis (Swing Low); Bruce McKenty (Magnet Ass) and wife Francine; Chris Sautter (Sabre Blue) & now-wife Joetta; Dick Hanscom (Yes I Can Fly An OH-6 With 1 Pedal); Doug Madigan (Sabre White); Buffalo Bob Monette (Sabre 20) and brother Bill Monette; plus one brave lady from Ohio, Barbara Godbey, who was returning for a second visit. We selected the **Vietnam Battlefield Tours** company after interviewing them at the 2010 VHPA. They did an outstanding job arranging, customizing, and scheduling the trip that we wanted, as opposed to taking us on a 'cookie cutter' itinerary that best served them. Because of their extra efforts to meet our needs, we enjoyed a very rewarding, healing, and much-needed trip that was a long time coming for all of us. From the warm welcomes we received from the people in Saigon, to the restaurant help, hotel staff, local tour guides, the police, and the occasional soldier we encountered, it was all good.

We started our tour in Saigon visiting spots we had never seen during our combat tours. On the first day we toured the Presidential Palace – site of

We all have returned to Viet Nam in many ways. ... Sometimes our minds wander as we drive down the road; sometimes a memory is sparked as we overhear a snip of conversation; often we relive incidents as we attempt to fall asleep; and, maybe, we remember our experiences as we

tanks breaching the gate in 1975 signaling the fall of Saigon, and the War Remnants Museum with its displays and exhibits that clearly proved that the "victor" gets to write the history! We had time during the first few days to shop for souvenirs in local shopping venues, sample great food, drink many cold beers, and even play a round of golf at the Viet Nam Golf and Country Club. We illegally stuck our heads over a tall concrete fence for a quick look at Bien Hoa airfield (no longer in use) and we think we were standing on or close to our own Lassiter Heliport. Our first few days were great; only to be followed by more.

Departing Saigon, we headed west for our combat and forward areas. First was Lai Khe, where we found a section of asphalt that could be recognized as the old airstrip. Today, there is not much there, but it didn't take much to flush out the memories that still linger. Dick Hanscom landed his OH-6 here after losing a pedal, the heel of his boot, and his chin bubble to a 51-Cal round. We delivered a C-130 crew of seven here after they were shot down over An Loc and had crash-landed 10 miles west of Lai Khe. Buffalo Bob was the aircraft commander of a UH-1H during that rescue. The C-130 crew received Silver Stars; and the CAV received a pallet of fruit. And sadly, it was here that we received the bodies of 1LT Brewer and CW2 Townsend after they had been shot down with an SA-7 over An Loc a week earlier. These are only a few of the memories, but that section of asphalt was like hallowed ground to us.

We then rolled north on HWY 13, Thunder Road, to An Loc, one of the provincial capitals that was a center point of the Easter Offensive. Because of the known threat of the SA-7 during the war, we would approach at 5,000 feet over the city center (the ONLY cold spot) and spiral down to the deck. From there we would recon to the west until we took fire... which never took that long. But, on the rapid descent from 5K to 100 feet, the co-pilot/gunner, if crazy enough, would shoot a 35mm camera rather than

man the turret. As luck would have it, I brought some of my photos of the devastated An Loc on the trip showing the well-known 'round-a-bout'. (Top left of this picture).

We found our old battle area had been rebuilt, and was now prosperous, lively, and friendly. As we stood on the reconstructed nicely-painted round-a-bout, we were directed to visit the school house one block away. The school remains in its war-ravaged condition as a remem-



Photo of An Loc, the center of the battle of the NVA's Easter Offensive of 1972 when they tried to drive all the way to Saigon. Because of the SA-7 threat, the pilots of F Troop would fly to the center of the city at 5,000 feet, marked by the round-a-bout found at the top left of this photo, and spiral down to the deck before they began their missions.



The "round-a-bout" of An Loc today. The entire area has been rebuilt, and is now prosperous, lively, and friendly. About a block away the government does maintain an old school building its war ravaged condition as a remembrance to the local people.

brance to the local people.

Next, we continued north to Loc Ninh where we roamed the airstrip finding tidbits of war, including 51-Cal projectiles, and recalling numerous stories of the POW exchanges that took place here. Both Mike Syverson and Doug Madigan stayed on after the cease fire to participate in that event. At lunchtime our guide took us to a local shop now owned by a former ARVN captain. He had spent six years in a re-education camp after the war.

This extremely nice, gracious gentleman was thrilled to meet us. It was an interesting experience for him and an outstanding feel-good for us. In appreciation, Buffalo awarded him the 1/9 brass from his cap (shown in the picture).



We visit with a former ARVN Captain who spent six years in a government re-education camp. The very nice and gracious gentleman was thrilled to meet us. In appreciation of his sacrifice, Buffalo awarded him the 1/9 Cav brass from his cap.

on his map 40+ years ago, we got as close as we could to that memorable spot. In true Cav fashion, Magnet Ass Bruce McKenty (shown below with wife and brothers), led us as we christened "LZ Bobby" with scotch and tears. Bobby Reinhart is now deceased, and Bruce, his co-pilot gunner, is now the National Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. That spot had burned a lasting place in our minds; this short visit with our brothers started a long-awaited healing process. As daylight waned, our recollection of continuing onward to Tay Ninh for the night became increasingly fuzzy as we consumed additional adult beverages while raucously singing Cav Songs.

Our evening meal was served at a local Tay Ninh restaurant owned by the woman who, during the war, was rated the most highly-decorated VC sniper. At the time of her duty, she was 18 years old. She was now a charming lady, who proudly displays her uniform and medals. We talked, laughed, and shared stories. So in just one day, we had lunch with a fellow comrade-in-arms, visited the crash site where two troopers survived a blazing journey to earth in a destroyed G Model Cobra, and ate dinner with one of our past enemies. What a day...

From there, the next stop was the obligatory Cu Chi Tunnel tour. What a feat of engineering... and we were glad that we didn't know what we were landing on when our missions dictated the use of their airstrip.

We spent the night back in Saigon, but early the next morning we were off to the Mekong River for a hydrofoil journey to Vung Tau. What a beautiful and relaxing place! Proving that it really is a very small world, as we exited the boat, Buffalo spotted a local with a ball cap displaying "Ft Rucker Army Aviation Center, ANAF Cadet."

After spending one night in Vung Tau, we hydro-foiled back to Saigon, and quickly boarded our bus for Tan Son Nhut Airport to catch our flight to Dalat.

For the rest of our trip, we were strictly tourists. There were no old battlefields on which to relive memories, just ones new places to share our brotherhood with wives and comrades. Dalat is a beautiful mountain hideaway – a charming university town located in the 5,000-foot hills in the



A local Vung Tau man and his wife greet us after our hydrofoil ride on Mekong River from Saigon. And yes, his ball cap does say "Ft Rucker Army Aviation Center, VNAF Cadet." He graduated from Flight School 1971 and for these last 40+ years, he still wears it for "Special Occasions".

From there, we proceeded to a spot where two great Americans, Bobby Reinhart and Bruce McKenty, were shot down by an SA-7 but miraculously survived after plummeting to earth on fire. After a trek through miles of rubber trees, using a handheld GPS and a circle Buffalo had drawn

southern II Corps region that was spared during the war. From there we had great fun traveling down the curvy mountain road to our next stop: the beachside resort of Nha Trang, where we spent two days and nights sightseeing, shopping, and staging our own cyclo-race to the restaurant for some much-missed western food.

From there we were back on Hwy 1 north for a night in Qui Nhon, another beachside resort. The next morning, we ventured through the Mang Yang Pass and onward to An Khe where we remembered fellow 1st Cav troopers who had lived, fought, and died here. The following day we were off to Pleiku, where not too many Yanks venture. We walked the streets and got mobbed by the smiling children as school was getting out... all flashing peace signs and eager to try out their emerging English skills on native English speakers.

The next morning is one of the experiences we had been waiting for...traveling north to Kontum to visit one of the Vinh Son orphanages. We had hauled our contributions of clothes, school supplies, candy, toys, and money our entire trip and now it was time to put it all to good use. What a heart-wrenching and heartwarming experience... the two feelings are difficult to explain. The orphanage is home to children from "the minorities." It was clean, pleasant, and well-attended by the Sisters and volunteers who were full of love for the children the government has all but forgotten. It was difficult to leave those smiling faces as we got back on the road to Pleiku. To learn more visit: [www.friendsofsvo.org](http://www.friendsofsvo.org).

We took an evening flight back to Saigon for our last night in-country. After settling in to our hotel, we hit the streets for some last minute shopping topped off by a last round of drinks at the famous Roof Top Bar atop the Rex Hotel. Retelling stories and recalling our favorite experiences brought tears to our eyes.

Our two weeks together were fantastic and truly not easy to explain. Our old and new memories of Viet Nam and its people complete a cycle in our lives. Special thanks to the wives and friends who love and support us on ventures like this, and for not asking "Why do you need to do that?"

It took nearly 30 years for our small F-Troop 1 CAV to start coming together and re-bonding. Within our group of six, we all stayed in and retired. Collectively, we have 8 combat tours, 5125 combat hours, 18,584 military flight hours, and 126 years of service. We have been awarded 3 LM, 1 DMSM, 6 MSM, 4 DFCs, 3 PHs, 8 BSM, 185 AM & 10 AM-V, 3 ARCM-V and 3 Broken Wings. We built our lives, found jobs, created professions, married, and raised families as we waited patiently for America to accept what we were sent to do over 40 years ago.

Our heart-felt appreciation goes to Vietnam Battlefield Tours, especially our patient guide and fellow VN vet Gene Miller, for arranging a trip that included all the things and places F Troop 1st Cavalry wanted to do and see. [www.vietnambattlefieldtours.com](http://www.vietnambattlefieldtours.com)

*The country is doing great.*

Bob Monette And Editors  
Francine McKenty and Joetta Sautter  
Sabre 20 72-73 We Can  
WE Will



To R Dick Hanscom, Doug Madigan, Chris Sautter, Francine McKenty, Mike Syverson, Bruce McKenty, Bob Monette

# VHPA 2014 CALENDAR

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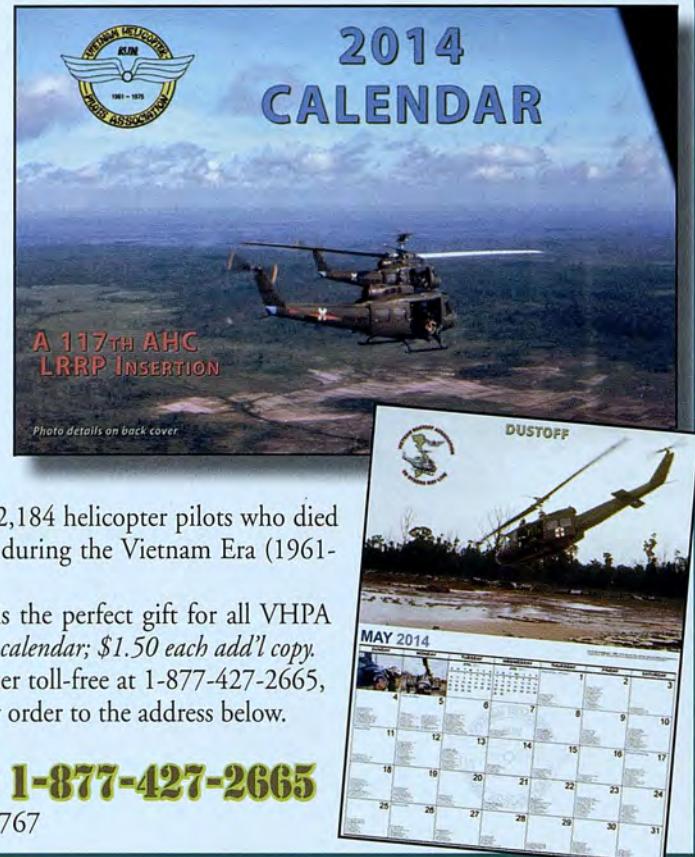
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# BANSHEE ROCK DEDICATION, MEMORIAL GARDENS, VIETNAM WAR MUSEUM

by Steve Pullen, *Banshee 11*

This past October, seventeen former troopers from B Troop 2nd Squadron 17th Cavalry met at the Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells Texas to dedicate the Banshee Rock and three memorial bricks. The troopers present consisted of pilots, crew chiefs, scout observers and blues. Many brought their families.

On that cold Saturday morning the troopers linked up in front of the museum and after touring the museum's Welcome Center we walked over to the memorial garden where our rock was covered. At VHPA reunions I had seen all the pilots (John Yearwood, Don Bullard, Bill Snider, Frank

Jones and Bill Jones) but I had not seen any of the former enlisted troopers for 42 years! After

the dedication, we spent several hours catching up. We laughed as we remembered many of the funny things that happened and of course we told war stories. Although I had been involved in many of those stories, I was surprised that I

was the only one that remembered correctly the names, locations and the events as they really happened. I'm now convinced that time has affected all their long term memories.

The idea of the rock to commemorate our unit and service came from an article in the VHPA newsletter published just before the Orlando reunion. At the reunion, the rock was discussed and all the pilots present agreed to support the project and split the cost. John Yearwood took the lead and contacted the museum. Thru the museum John made contact with the stone cutter. That was the easy part. The design for the rock was not as easy. Once the majority agreed, the design was sent to the stone cutter and he created a masterpiece.

Months before I arrived in Texas, someone asked me to say a few words at the dedication and I accepted. At first I did not have any idea about what I would say. Then another pilot suggested focusing on the troop's achievements. I then went to the unit's history and gathered facts about Banshee Troop.

B Troop was one of five troops that comprised 2/17th Air Cavalry. Headquarters, B & D Troops were located at Camp Eagle, A Troop was at Quang Tri and C Troop flew out of Phu Bai. For more than three years the squadron operated in Northern I Corps. In February 1972 the entire squadron along with the remainder of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) redeployed to Ft. Campbell KY. While the Squadron was in Vietnam, we were awarded a Presidential Unit Citation, two Army Valorous Unit awards and several Vietnamese Unit Awards. Troopers from B Troop were awarded; three Distinguished Service Crosses, twenty-two Silver Stars, one hundred and twenty-four Distinguished Flying Crosses, forty-six Bronze Stars for Valor, seventy-one Air medals for Valor, eighty-nine Army Commendation Medals for



Our author Steve Pullen (on the left) joins his old wingmen Don Bullard and Bill Snider at the B Troop, 2/17th Cav Memorial Rock Dedication ceremony in October of 2012.

Valor, six Soldier Medals and three hundred and four Purple Hearts.

B Troop lost twenty-nine aircraft to enemy action and three more to accidents. The majority of aircraft lost were OH-6As.

The B Troop Aero-Rifle Platoon recovered twenty-one helicopters from various units in the division and destroyed three more in place. In addition, they recovered countless aircrew members, rescued one downed pilot, supported seven ranger teams in contact, killed hundreds of NVA soldiers, conducted hundreds of air assaults and captured countless enemy weapons including one 37mm AA gun.

Fifty-three of our troopers were killed in action or died of wounds. Six troopers are still listed as killed in action bodies not recovered. All six were scout aircrews shot down around Tiger Mountain in the Ashau Valley. To those aircrew members; WO1 Robertson, SGT Pietrzak, 1LT Hale, SGT Grantham, CPT Urquhart and SP5 Chavira, we dedicated the memorial bricks.

Once my remarks were complete, Don Bullard pulled the cover off the rock, for most this was the first time they had seen it. Many troopers had misty eyes but their smiles and nods revealed their approval of the design. To a trooper they were proud of their service, to B Troop, the Army and our nation. Our memorial bricks are directly across

from our rock so it was very easy for us to find them. I saw several of the troopers, when they read the names of those still waiting on that deadly mountain to finally return home, come to attention and render a hand salute. Those fallen troopers have not been forgotten and will continue to be honored.

The word about the Banshee Rock has spread. Many of the troopers who were not able to attend the dedication have now made or are planning a visit to the museum site.

There is still space in the garden for other unit rocks and bricks. Contact the National Vietnam War Museum for full details: [www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org](http://www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org)



Steve Pullen

Once known as Banshee 11 and later as Centaur 11  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

# “Extractions R Us”

by Bob Graham

## Foreword

In order to gather critical battlefield intelligence, specially trained soldiers, Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) teams, are inserted by helicopter into enemy territory in a covert manner. Then after three days it is intended to take them back out as stealthily as we put them in. A reality of the Vietnam War, being stealthy in a Huey was only a state of mind. Plans don't always work out, leading to a guns blazing, "hot extraction" as we called it.

## The Big Picture

The second Centaur light fire team climbed to the west over the ordered tree lines of Dau Tieng, Vietnam, and then quickly disappeared in the distance. They would link up to an ongoing LRRP insertion and the first fire team with a half hour staggered fuel reserve. I made a mental note of the time, 10:25 AM.

It was momentarily peaceful in that French colonial setting. Nearly anywhere one stood, he could quickly line up with a disciplined row of trees, no tropical brush. These were 1966 Vietnam remnants of a now past Indochina exploitation. There was pseudo serenity to the morning; it was nearly distracting to be conducting combat operations. Perhaps a warm croissant and coffee in the shade under this warm midmorning sun would have been more appropriate for the setting.

Airborne, troop commander MAJ Jim Peterson was executing a small, but complex daylight LRRP team insertion. During our early morning pre-planning walk and talk, reviewing the uncertainty of current intelligence and our own recent experience of increasing VC activity, he had decided not to chance a possibly compromised daylight insertion. He was apprehensive as they were to be placed near the Cambodian border. I would plan all normal D Troop quick reaction assets airborne, including the aero rifles. The exception, MAJ Myron "Mike" Squires with a slick, 65-9661 as a standby. Every other combat asset of D Troop (Air), Centaurs, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry was at least 45 minutes flying time away at the 25th Infantry Division Cu Chi base camp.

My operations function was now minimal, that of monitoring a LRRP team already in place near the Michelin Rubber Plantation and the unfolding insertion far to the west near the Cambodian Parrot Beak. Normally, I planned and then flew the insertions. Mike Squires and I are free to listen to progress on multiple radio channels from the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) at the 25th Division's bustling forward 3rd Brigade base at Dau Tieng. We idled, mind raced, kicked dust, and waited.

Listening to normal Centaur insertion radio chatter is not action-packed drama; it is akin to watching paint dry. It's a terse few "Rogers" during a preplanned battle drill with strict minimal radio traffic. The same is true for the LRRP team who use mike clicks to answer arranged memorized ques-



Crew of Huey 65-9661, taken in April of 1966 at Cu Chi. Shows the ship's Crew Chief, SP4 James Pyburn (on left) and the ship's Door Gunner SP4 Herb Beasley. Photo taken in the "Centaur Corral", the heliport for D troop (Air Cav), 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment.

tions. The every half-hour check-in is just a few mike clicks. Drama is dry when things are going well. For a short while we have private thoughts, and then I must answer a pressing duty call and count flies in the latrine.

## Compromise

Mike Squires dashed out of the 3rd Brigade TOC. "Hey, Bob! Want to go for a ride with me? Grab your helmet; let's go. I need a copilot, right now!"

The team was compromised. They requested immediate extraction. No mike clicks now. In guarded panting whispers they reported being outnumbered, conducting evasion maneuvers to the north edge of the designated extraction punch bowl, skirting the vicinity of the pickup location. To avoid a face off fire fight they were playing a running game of hide and seek maneuvers.

This hot Centaur extraction was starting after four days of LRRP team success. A fresh new team now placed near a rather dense jungle, VC high traffic trail to the northeast of Dau Tieng

was compromised. It was 10:55. Nearly thirty miles to the northwest near the Cambodian Parrot Beak, a second team was airborne: an insertion in progress. It would be 11:15 for the first fire team to return for refueling. This was a not-so-good situation.

The troop was at that moment totally committed making the second insertion to the west. We did not have fire team support, a near absolute standard for all our extractions. Mike did not have a copilot for the standby extraction slick. This makes two not-so-goods, maybe even one complete "oh shit!"

As the Centaur operations officer, I was the only free aviator left on the ground at the forward base. It was quickly agreed, it was up to us. Quite frankly, I think Mike would have gone alone had I not agreed to fly with him. Once a team is compromised, things get worse by the minute.



James Pyburn poses in front of the flight-line bunker of the Aerorifle Platoon (the Blues) of D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment.

### Working the Problem

In the 3rd Brigade TOC, I quickly briefed the S-3 operations duty officer and the brigade's artillery liaison officer. There was a LRRP radioman right with them. Urgently wanted were a fire team and air strikes. Our troop artillery liaison already had his coordinated concentrations and line of fire on my tactical flight map. I requested the TOC artillery liaison to connect the dots between two on-call concentrations on the north side of the pickup zone with additional planned fire so a 200-yard wall of artillery fire could be quickly placed without adjustment.

I heard the Huey coming up to full RPM! Mike was getting impatient. "I'm out of here, my friend. I'll be on the radio with you in about two minutes checking on how you're doing with the extraction fire support."

Mike was ready to pull pitch on Slick 65-9661. Crew chief Specialist James Pyburn was ready by with his M-60 in the open left cargo door. Door gunner Specialist Herb Beasley held the right front door open, waiting at the ready with my armored chest protector.

As I slipped into the armored seat, Mike immediately pulled pitch, initiating a climb directly from the parking pad. He was smiling at my consternation of not yet strapping on my seat harness. I plugged into the intercom, and Mike, still calm, but stern, "Bob, I didn't want to waste any more time. Those guys need to get out. Every second counts."

I quickly settled in, shoulder harness and seat belt straps on, my tactical map available and list of radio frequencies on my knee pad. I proceeded with the fire support coordination. Then I realized that the control pedals were beyond reach. I couldn't fly this thing if I had to.

Damn! I'm a minimum-sized aviator; the last person in the right seat had longer legs than I. Stretching and twisting was to no avail, not even my tippy toes would reach the pedals. The whole crew was having a snicker as I loosened my harness, squirming to hook my toes under the pedals and click them back to the short aviator position. Mike pretended not to notice.

### We're Going to do it This Way

Once airborne, I broadcast a blanket call on guard channel for any gunships near the Michelin Rubber Plantation. Nothing. I switched to Saigon Air Force forward air control. There was nothing available in the next ten minutes. The extraction was in the vicinity of a highly active VC trail system along a small tributary of the Saigon River, northwest of the Michelin Rubber Plantation. The LRRP team continued evading, delaying their return to the insertion LZ for extraction.

There could be no second chance or other alternate. This sequence had to be executed at the spot planned. There was no other possible pickup spot within a mile. Mike explained, "Bob, just stay light on the controls, unless I'm shot." That's pretty straightforward. He reminded Beasley and Pyburn; no suppress fire until we had a positive location of the evading team.

We approached the overgrown clearing in the jungle canopy about

the size of two football fields. Then a call came on guard channel by a fire team from heaven, Cu Chi's newly arrived 116th Airmobile Company, Stingers. They had received a blanket call about our need for fire team support and were actually over our area and ready to support our extraction. Mike entered a short final for the pickup. Smoke was popped 100 yards away by the evading team. A small blue cloud appeared, expanding, drifting above the thick foliage at the edge of this low dense brushy overgrown jungle punch bowl.

Beasley tapped me on the shoulder and motioned for me to slide the protective wing on my armor seat forward. I nodded thanks. I notified the Stinger fire team of the smoke, and they confirmed that they already had blue smoke sighted. I asked them to stay ready, but to hold fire as we were not yet assured of the team's actual location. An early call for the coordinated artillery concentrations had to be delayed as the line of fire was over the pickup spot and therefore much too close for us to maneuver. There is no intercom chatter. The crew is individually focused, tense, as all aboard know we could easily be alighting atop the VC. It had happened before.

### Chopping Wood

We were approaching straight into fifteen-to-twenty foot high brush. The main rotor blades started whacking off the high bushes to our front while Mike positioned the tail rotor in the only clear spot, in very high grass.

It is a disturbingly unique sound when heard for the first time. It's sort of a loud rapid tick, tick, ticking. As the bush diameter reached about an inch, each whacked section sounded like an AK-47 round snapping by. Even though I had chopped a little wood, it was adding to the adrenaline rush to say the least. Later, I found out that the day before, the LRRP team had to actually drop about eight feet from the skids at this very spot. No wonder it had then seemed to be such a clean swift insertion.

This was surely no idyllic pickup spot. We had to hack our way to get low enough for the team to at least climb up on the skids. The concealment was excellent. We had bushes pressed against the windscreen.

### The Gatling Boys

On the LRRP frequency, a low panting voice in the clear, "Got you in sight, smoke behind us" I requested the Stinger fire team to place suppressing fire beyond to the north of the LRRP smoke. They oblige. This was our first experience of the new M21 gun system with twin M134 mini guns actually firing. Gatling guns each spit blazing fire at 4,000 rounds per minute.

It was awesome as they literally mowed the heavy brush with suppressive fire. Bushes flew, and branches fell to the ground, shattered by the screaming guns of the "Gatling Boys" firing well behind the team rushing unseen toward us through the brush and tall grass.



SP4 Herb Beasley poses in front of Huey 65-9661



SP4 Herb Beasley

## RESOLUTE

The crew chief opened the Huey door  
Squires entered as many times before

He slid into the familiar contour  
His friendly armored seat

Returning to the embrace  
A trusted friend: in a hostile place.

It accepts his body  
Security now surrounds.

Strapping to its friendly grip  
All controls are at his finger tip

Squeeze firmly, the starting turbine hum  
Resolutely this extraction flight has begun.

Bob Graham

My first visual contact over the wing of my armored seat was a red-faced, rather determined young man in the lead, crashing through the underbrush about fifty feet away. Calmly, Specialist Beasley called on the intercom, "team in sight," and began his suppressive fire: a skillfully applied waist-high blasting arc of tracers, a short swing on each side of the team leader dashing toward him. He then applied short, carefully controlled bursts; the tracers seemed to be passing just over their bobbing heads as the team closed. My finger tips are on the cyclic following Mikes movements, just in case. Mike calmly held the Huey poised, setting lightly on the skids, waiting.

All five approached running in a close trail formation aiming to enter though the right cargo door. They literally nosedived through the door, sliding into a panting pile. Beasley was still smoking the brush close in now with his M-60, firing so close that there were ricochets spewing skyward with tumbling tracers. Without interfering, Pyburn reached under him and grabbed the last man still standing on the skids as Mike pulled pitch. He was brusquely yanked by his web belt onto the pile of smiling, sweaty guys gathering their composure on the cargo floor.

#### Departure

Without prompting, the team quickly seated themselves and buckled up as Mike began the takeoff. We were all startled by a sudden repetitive banging thud, a quick heart-sinking noise. The main rotor hit a substantial-sized scrub tree in our path causing the whole aircraft to shudder, sending a truly creepy sensation through my spine. Large tree pieces whirled in the rotor wash.

Deftly Mike adjusted the path of ascent; muttering to the effect, "No need to be foolish and just wack'em off on the way out. These are a new set of blades." There is no turning back as long as the great Huey machine will continue to fly.

Pyburn and Beasley now directed suppressive fire forward and to each side of our climbing path to the tree line. Simultaneously the Gatling Boys applied their final touch with a blazing roar. As we cleared the tree line, Mike joshed, "Bob, did I hear your voice go a little squeaky back there? Were you a little excited"? "He claimed that my voice had gone to a high pitch." Could that have been true? I get excited, an artilleryman, a gunship person to the heart? "I loved shoot'em ups!" I told him. "Gunship people did not do such crazy things, this playing around in the bushes."

We thanked the Gatling Boys, the Stinger fire team from heaven, the strangers.

Their reply was that they wanted to know when we were going to do this again; it was pretty cool. I gave them a second thanks and advised them of the artillery fire that would be inbound in seconds. One of the LRRP team reached over from the back and gave us both a thump on the shoulder. That's why we were there!

I called for the initial preplanned artillery concentrations. First priority: fires covering the area that connected the dots, then with a five-minute pause, the entire punch bowl extraction area. What

the hell, why not shoot all the planned concentrations? That's what the artillery was for. We did not want to leave the NVA or VC with the impression that they could just chase our LRRP teams around and not have some serious issues to deal with. As we cleared the artillery line of fire, the north side of the jungle punch bowl erupted with explosions.

Mike relaxes, glances at me and smiles. Over the intercom he compliments his crew and asks how the LRRP team is getting along. Pyburn comments, "I think a cold beer would be appreciated." I note the time; MAJ Peterson should be landing back at Dau Tieng, and it is 11:00

I had just experienced a first. Behind me were planning, coordinating and fire team support of LRRP missions. This was my first, hands-on, hot, long-range reconnaissance patrol extraction. A live demonstration by the distinguished crew of Centaur slick 65-9661: MAJ Myron Squires, Crew Chief SP4 James Pyburn, and Door Gunner SP4 Herb Beasley.

Copyright VHPA version May 2013 Robert L Graham

## Myron Squires

Resolute could be his name  
Shies away from fame

No heroism does he aspire  
As he flies into the enemy fire

The resolute Myron Squires.

Bob Graham



Robert L. (Bob) Graham entered active duty in 1953 as a Sergeant from the Washington National Guard, graduated from Artillery and Guided Missile OCS in 1955. He completed Fixed Wing Flight training in Class 58-4 and helicopter transition Class 59-6. He was Operations Officer of the Centaurs, D Troop (Air Cavalry), 3rd Squadron, 4th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi RVN, August 1966 until February 1967. He enjoyed a brief vacation at C&GS during which he was selected for the June 1968 activation, training and deployment of the Dragons, A Battery (Aerial Artillery) of the 77th Artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. They joined the 101st Airborne (Airmobile) RVN December 1968, establishing the battery Dragon's Den Heliport at Camp Eagle. At rotation time, May 1969, he became Assistant G-3 Air at II Field Forces. Bob retired in March 1977 as a Master Army Aviator and resides in Fairfax, Virginia, with his wife, Diana. They are blessed with four children and ten grandchildren, age's one-minus through twenty-two. He is a member of Virginia Poets Society and the Poetry and Memoir Workshops of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia. He may be reached at: [REDACTED]

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KEEPING THE PROMISE

DPMO announced that the remains of an US Army soldier, missing from the Vietnam War, have been identified.

Army Spc. 5 John L. Burgess, 21, of Sutton Bay, Mich., was the crew chief of a UH-1H Iroquois helicopter that crashed in Binh Phuoc Province, South Vietnam. Also, killed in the crash were 1st Lt. Leslie F. Douglas Jr., 1st Lt. Richard Dyer and Sgt. 1st Class Juan Colon-Diaz. Another crew member, Pfc. John Goosman, survived the crash and was rescued.

On June 30, 1970, while on a command and control mission, the helicopter was struck by enemy fire, causing it to crash. Shortly thereafter, friendly forces recovered remains of Douglas, Colon-Diaz, and Dyer. The three men were individually identified and buried with full military honors. At that time, no remains were attributed to Burgess.

From 1992 to 2012, more than a dozen joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams investigated the case, in Binh Phuoc Province, recovering human remains, personal effects, military equipment, and aircraft wreckage associated with this loss. Finally Burgess was accounted for using forensic and circumstantial evidence. Remains representing Dyer, Colon-Diaz, and Burgess, were buried as a group in a single casket, on July 2, 2013, at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

The number of Americans announced by DPMO as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is now 938. Another 63 US personnel, recovered by the US and ID'd before the end of the war, bring the official total of remains repatriated from the Vietnam War to 1,001. Of the 1,647 missing and unaccounted-for personnel, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,276 (VN-469, VS-807); Laos-311; Cambodia-53; PRC territorial waters-7; 450+ over-water losses are among 630 DPMO lists as No Further Pursuit.



## Don't Forget!

The deadline for this year's  
**Christmas in Vietnam**  
issue is Sep. 25th!



Send your contribution  
to the Aviator TODAY!

[Aviator@VHPA.org](mailto:Aviator@VHPA.org)  
or call [REDACTED]

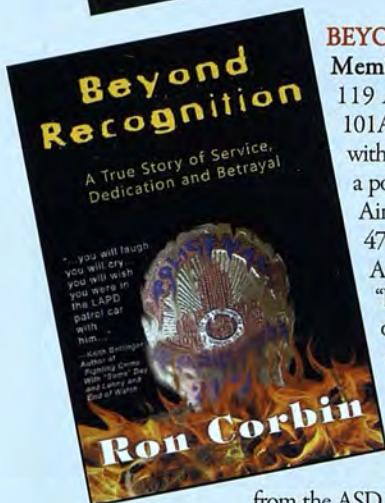
MEMBERS - HAVE A BOOK FOR JOHN TO REVIEW?  
CONTACT HIM AT: [BOOKREVIEWS@VHPA.ORG](mailto:BOOKREVIEWS@VHPA.ORG)

By **VHPA Life member:**  
**JOHN PENNY**

E-MAIL: [BOOKREVIEWS@VHPA.ORG](mailto:BOOKREVIEWS@VHPA.ORG)



**CAPTAIN METHANE AND HIS FINELY FEATHERED FRIENDS** is the latest book by Dorcey Wingo, aka "Captain Methane," who served with B/4 and A/4 AVN, 4 INF in 69-70. After Vietnam, Wingo flew in Peru, Mexico, and all over the US performing tasks that only a helicopter could do. He performed a lot of hair-raising jobs; including heli-logging, really, really long line work, and cozying up to bridges, and high tension power lines. Along the way, he found a talent for observing and writing about his days as a gypsy helicopter pilot and the people he met.

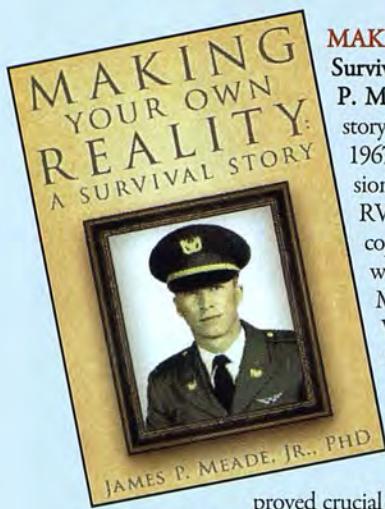


**BEYOND RECOGNITION** by VHPA Member Ron Corbin who served with 119 AHC in 66-67 and A/158 AVN 101ABN in 1969 is a memoir of his time with the Los Angeles Police Department as a police officer and pilot with the LAPD Air Support Division (ASD) flying Bell 47G and 206B aircraft. Corbin left the Army in 1969 but still had the helicopter "bug." He paid his "dues" as a patrol officer on the mean streets of LA for three years before he was accepted into the ASD.

Corbin was elated to be back in the cockpit but found a strange atmosphere of jealousy; in particular Chief Pilot who presumed all ex-military pilots were dangerous and had "bad habits." Curiously, the usual

from the ASD

ex-military pilots were dangerous and had "bad habits." Curiously, the usual



**MAKING YOUR OWN REALITY: A SURVIVAL STORY**, by VHPA Member James P. Meade, Jr., PhD, is an extraordinary story of survival and recovery. On May 8, 1967, while returning from a combat mission and outside the wire at Tay Ninh, RVN, the main rotor flew off, the helicopter crashed, and Jim Meade died. Ten weeks later James Meade was born at Madigan General Hospital, Ft. Lewis, Washington.

Severely brain damaged with loss of all memories, there was little hope he would have a bountiful, productive life. However, an unusual decision by one of his doctors at Madigan

proved crucial to his survival: he was transferred to Ward 13. The men on Ward 13 – the amputee ward, accepted responsibility for James providing him with care, companionship, encouragement, and

Finely Feathered Friends is a collection of stories, some previously published in Vertical Magazine and Aviation International News plus many new ones. Wingo has a keen wit, reminiscent of Mark Twain and shares great insight regarding the personalities and characters of those he met along the way. Wingo's writing brings out the lurking poet in him and invites his readers straight into the cockpit and psyche of a helicopter pilot with a talent few authors have achieved. I highly recommend this book.

Other books by Wingo include: The Rise and Fall of Captain Methane: Autobiography of a Maverick and Wind Loggers, a narrative of his time slinging logs in the tall timber. If you haven't read these books, I suggest you do.

**Captain Methane and his Finely Feathered Friends**  
(\$20.00, 161 pages) by Dorcey Alan Wingo, ISBN: 978-0615813400  
is available at: <http://www.dorceywingo.com>  
where you can also order his other books

Nomex flight suit and gloves, and flight helmet he wore as an Army Aviator were not issued as a matter of course and were also not authorized.

Corbin met all the challenges of his flight training and aircraft checkouts in an AO packed with air traffic. He obtained a CFI and was promoted to an IP position in spite of petty nitpicking from the Chief Pilot who complained he was too familiar with his students in their small ASD unit.

An engine failure and fiery crash in 1976, while training an ASD student pilot on pinnacle landings, was fatal for the student, and Corbin was severely burned. Ironically, the visor on his "unauthorized" flight helmet saved his face. What followed for Corbin was an agonizing series of reconstructive surgeries and "survivor's guilt" along with an attempt by the LAPD Board of Inquiry to place the blame for the crash on him. But Corbin had documentation of his own. I highly recommend this well written journey into the world of law enforcement aviation.

**Beyond Recognition** was recently honored with a first place award for non-fiction works at the Public Safety Writers Association Conference in Las Vegas.

**Beyond Recognition: A True Story of Service, Dedication and Betrayal**  
(\$12.30, 254 pages, \$5.95 Kindle) by Ron Corbin, ISBN: 978-1610090705 is  
available at your local book store, Amazon or other book suppliers.

inclusion within the human milieu. They read his family's letters to him and fed him before he learned how to feed himself. They were accepting of him and always there to support him and even button his shirts for him.

James Meade had no memory of his first 19-years of life. He had no knowledge of Vietnam, much less who or where he was. He was unable to speak and did not know he had legs or what they were for. The men of Ward 13, along with the unwavering love and determination of his parents and siblings, started Meade on his long journey that led to a career in psychology where he continues to help many others with traumatic brain injuries.

Meade points out that those who suffer a severe brain injury never recover completely. But there is increased hope in new methods of treatment that he has researched, including imagery and visualization. This book is not just a memoir of Meade's recovery and the miracle of the human mind and its capacity for self-healing, but an understanding of the importance of faith and the human-to-human connection for the healthy survival of us all.

**Making Your Own Reality: A Survival Story** (\$15.67, 218 pages, \$3.95 Kindle) by James P. Meade, PhD, ISBN: 978-1449793357 is  
available at your local book store, Amazon or other book suppliers.



# VHPA'ers in the News



## National Aviation Hall of Fame to induct VHPA Member Major General Patrick H. Brady

Major General Patrick H. Brady will be among four men, and the first Army Aviator, to be enshrined into the National Aviation Hall of Fame. The 51st Annual Enshrinement Dinner and Ceremony will take place on Friday, October 4, 2013 at the National Aviation Hall of Fame and the adjacent National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. Often referred to as "America's Oscar Night of Aviation," the black-tie dinner and ceremony is open to the public.

Major General Patrick H. Bradley is considered by many to be the top helicopter pilot of the Vietnam War, Brady is legendary among Army aviation and aerial medevac communities. His 34-year Army career includes flying over 2,500 combat missions as a Dust Off helicopter pilot, saving over 5,000 wounded, and earning the Medal of Honor among his other awards for valor. He also developed foul weather and tactical techniques for air ambulance rescue, none of which had ever been executed in combat before. Serving to present Brady his enshrinement at the ceremony will be his daughter, former Army Captain Meghan Brady Smith.



## Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame to enshrine VHPA Member Lt. Col. Michael E. Sloniker

Lt. Col. Michael E. Sloniker will be among ten inductees into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame. The Enshrinement Dinner and Ceremony will take place on November 9th, at the Jim Thorpe Museum's Events Center, 4040 N Lincoln in Oklahoma City.



Lt. Col. Michael E. Sloniker, of Edmond, Oklahoma, who was born Aug 27, 1945, in Fort Sill. In 1971-72, he was an U-1H assistant platoon leader with the 174th Assault Helicopter Company, and Ops Officer for A Company 229th AHB, 23rd Infantry Division in South Vietnam. His medals and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star medal with Oak Leaf cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medal — 27th award with V and the Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters. He retired from the Army on Oct. 1, 1990, and joined Lockheed Martin Corp. He retired from Lockheed Martin in 2011. He currently serves as the Historian of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

"I did that what others did not want to be. I went where others feared to go and did what others failed to do. I asked nothing from those who gave nothing and reluctantly accepted the thought of eternal loneliness...should I fail I have seen the face of terror; felt the stinging cold of fear and enjoyed the sweet taste of a moments love. I have cried, pained and hoped, but most of all, I have lived times other would say were best forgotten. At least someday, I will be able to say that I was proud of what I was...A Soldier."

George Skypeck

*Respectfully submitted to the membership,*

Major D.W. Porter, USA Ret.

Tomahawk 26

E-Mail: [REDACTED]



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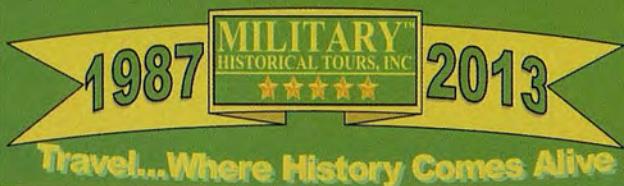
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For more information, to purchase tickets or questions about attending the event, please contact [vvmfbenefit@vvmf.org](mailto:vvmfbenefit@vvmf.org) or visit [www.vvmf.org/gala](http://www.vvmf.org/gala)



"The bottom line is, the war is over. It really wasn't over till I came back." General Norman Schwarzkopf, USA in 1993 during his return. **MILITARY HISTORICAL TOURS (MHT)** is proud to offer VHPA tours as we begin the 50th Anniversaries of the Vietnam War. Come back with VHPA brothers to visit places that have deep meaning for all helicopter pilots and our tours are custom designed to get you back to where you served. Our 15-day tour for only \$2495. Register now to get back in country with your buddies.



Above: Underway in the Delta during last year's Rotorheads Return. Right: MHT Tour Leader Capt Ed Garr with the 16th Chairman of the JCS General Peter Pace, USMC!



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# The Undercover Warrant

by Gary Krehbiel



Pilots of D Troop 1/1 Cav, Summer of 1970, Chu Lai, Vietnam

Growing up, I seldom wore a cap except to play baseball. Consequently, the requirement in the Army to wear a cap (cover) any time outside proved to be difficult initially. That is until a couple of royal butt-chewings by a drill sergeant. Then it was deeply ingrained in my mind that you NEVER go outside without your cover. Nowhere was this more apparent than my first days in Vietnam.

I had gone through basic training and flight school with a buddy who was prior service. George helped me a lot in getting through both. He gave me a lot of advice on "the game." I was pleasantly surprised when I ran into George in Tacoma, Washington enroute to Vietnam. It was even greater to find out in Cam Rahn that we were both going to Chu Lai. The morning after arriving in-country, we were at the Cam Rahn air terminal awaiting our flight to Chu Lai. Suddenly, there were these loud explosions and the building was shaking. This was my first taste of incoming. After the attack ended, they started bringing wounded into the terminal building. I got my first view of the wrath of war on human bodies, and I must admit it made quite an impression. Shortly thereafter, our C-130 arrived. We were loaded onto cargo pallets on the floor and tie-down straps were thrown across our laps. So much for the requirement of being buckled in before take-off.

Upon arriving in Chu Lai, we were taken to the in-country orientation center and were told we would be there a couple of days for training. We were released for the rest of the day, and a Cadre member took us to our hootch and gave us our sleeping assignments. Before leaving, he told us that once we got settled, we may want to locate the closest bunker, as Chu Lai had been hit with rockets the previous two nights. After the experience I had that morning, it goes without saying that I located the closest bunker and mapped out the quickest route. Then, George and I went to the club for dinner and a little refreshment. At the club, we ran into sev-

eral other buddies from flight school, and our planned little refreshment turned into a night of numerous refreshments.

After "last call" we headed to the hootch. I located my bed and then was very careful about placing my clothes strategically so that I could do a fireman's scramble in case of incoming. Shortly after laying my head down, the evening's refreshments did their thing and I was fast asleep. And then, the wrath of hell broke loose as rockets started landing all around us. I jumped up and ran frantically around the bed trying to locate my clothes. George ran by and shouted, "Get to the Bunker!" It wasn't until my eyes adjusted to the darkness in the bunker that I realized that I wasn't the only one in my underwear. George and most of the others were too.

After the attack ended, the staff came to the bunker to give the "all-clear" and started giving out detail assignments for clean-up as we left the bunker. I was a couple of guys behind George, and when they told him what to do, his prior service kicked in and he told them that he was an officer. They simply said OK and told him he could go back to the hootch. I instantly knew what I would say when they got to me. However, to my surprise, when they got to me they said, "Sir, you can go back to your hootch." How did they know I was an officer? I was in my underwear. It wasn't until I got back to the hootch and laid my head on the pillow that I realized that in my mad scramble, I had managed to find only my cap.

I cannot possibly tell you how silly I felt. I can only imagine how the cadre laughed as they told about this "Wobbie-One" that was so proud of his shiny little bar that he wore his cap even when in his underwear. The next day I walked sheepishly around the compound hoping that no one would recognize me as the Undercover Warrant.



Members of the Aerorifle (Blues) platoon, D Troop 1/1 Cav, Summer of 1970, Chu Lai, Vietnam

Gary Krehbiel  
D Troop 1/1 Cav—Scouts  
E-mail: [REDACTED]

# WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

Look the list over and if you recognize anyone, give them a call, drop them a line or send them an e-mail welcoming them into our Association. Full contact information is available either on-line in the Member Services section of our website, or through our staff at HQ by calling 1-800-505-VHPA.

Line 1, Last, first, MI and/or nickname of new member; double asterisks (\*\*) ID new life members

Line 2, his current city and state, branch of service

Line 3 -5 , his (Flight) Class and Vietnam (VN) Unit(s) served with, if that info is available

We welcome these 37 new Members to our Association! All have joined the VHPA during the period from 1 June through 4 August 2013

Bell, Terry A.  
Bogalusa, Louisiana, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 69-1  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
A/229 AHB 1 CAV in 68-69

Bourdo, Henry N 'Hank'  
Winters, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 69-34  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
504 FIELD DEPOT in 66-67;  
B/717 CAV in 70-71;  
A/717 CAV in 71

Bryant, John L  
Grand Prairie, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 68-510 68-16  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
176 AHC in 68-69

Burton, Robert O. 'Bob'  
Mary Esther, Florida,  
US Air Force  
Flight Class info not provided  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
20 SOS 14 ACW in 71-72

Charbonneau, Maurice E 'Mo' \*\*  
San Antonio, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 65-5  
Vietnam Unit(s): 116 AHC in 66-67; 229 AHB 1 CAV in 70-71

Clapp, Frederick H.  
Memphis, Missouri, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 70-19  
Vietnam Unit(s): 57 AHC in 70-71

Dunn, Stanton D.  
Scottsburg, Indiana, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 68-511 68-17  
Vietnam Unit(s) not provided

Dyer, Raymond O.  
Henrico, North Carolina,  
US Army  
Flight Class(s): 71-45 71-41  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
201 CAC in 72-73

Eldridge, Robert B. \*\*  
El Cajon, California, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 68-6  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
1 BDE 9 INF in 69-70

Grant, Richard J.  
West Valley City, Utah, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 70-19  
Vietnam Unit(s) not provided

Greiner, Raymond C. \*\*  
TP Ho Chi Minh, VIETNAM,  
US Army  
Flight Class(s): 68-21 68-37  
Vietnam Unit(s): 2  
54 MED DET in 67-68; 498 MED  
CO in 68-70; 48 AHC in 68-70

Hamilton, Clyde  
Pikeville, Kentucky, US Army  
Flight Class info not provided  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
HHC/229 AHB 1 CAV in 69-70

Harris, Cecil H  
Versailles, Kentucky, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 68-25  
Vietnam Unit(s) not provided

Johnson, Dennis K.  
Wilmette, Illinois, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 70-13 70-11  
Vietnam Unit(s): 23 ART GRP in  
70; 282 AHC in 70-72

Karn, Roger A.  
Cortland, New York, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 69-43 69-39  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
B/4/77 ARA 101 ABN in 70-71;  
2/17 CAV 101 ABN in 71

Keele, Duane  
Austin, Texas, Air America  
Flight Class info not provided  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
AIR AMERICA in 68-74

Kehn, Robert D. \*\*  
Meadville, Pennsylvania,  
US Army  
Flight Class(s): 68-511 68-19  
Vietnam Unit(s): 1 CAV DIV

Khanh, Dam Quang  
Alameda, California, Vietnamese  
Air Force  
Flight Class(s): 72-16  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
247 SQDN VNAF

Losorwith, Steven L. 'Dusty'  
Collierville, Tennessee, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 69-29 69-27  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
45 MED CO in 70

Maxson, Glen H.  
Seguin, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 68-521 68-39  
Vietnam Unit(s): 4 AVN 4 INF in  
69-70; 1 AVN 1 INF in 71-72

McCants, Omer L.  
Talbotton, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 69-14  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
162 AHC in 69-70

McConville, Thorpe J. 'Mac' \*\*  
Mason, Ohio, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 71-17  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
237 MED DET in 71-72

Miller, Robert L. \*\*  
Enid, Oklahoma, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 70-16  
Vietnam Unit(s): 327 TC DET in  
68; 344 TC CO in 68-69; 175 AHC  
in 70-71; 58 TC BN in 70-71

Moore, Murray E.  
Mooringsport, Louisiana,  
US Army  
Flight Class(s): 69-50  
Vietnam Unit(s): D/3/5 CAV  
in 70-71; C/3/17 CAV in 70-71

Pestel, Terrence R. 'Terry'  
Lombard, Illinois, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 67-23 68-1  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
C/227 AHB 1 CAV in 68-69

Picarella, Charles T.  
Elysburg, Pennsylvania, US  
Army  
Flight Class(s): 68-12 68-508  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
101 AVN 101 ABN in 68-69

Russell, James E. 'Jim'  
Fort Mill, South Carolina,  
US Army  
Flight Class(s): 70-45  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
FLIR NETT in 71-72

Shipley, Larry L. 'Blitz'  
Kempner, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 68-521 68-39  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
20 ENG BDE in 69-70

Smith, Gale N. \*\*  
Gainesville, Virginia, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 67-24  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
335 AHC in 68-69

Spence, Thomas D.  
Spring Hill, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 70-11 70-13  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
123 CAB 23 INF in 70-71

Stewart, William M. 'Bill'  
Manitou Springs, Colorado,  
US Army  
Flight Class(s): 68-510 68-16  
Vietnam Unit(s): 128 AHC in 69;  
173 AHC in 69; 25 CAC in 69-70

Summers, James R.  
Redmond, Washington, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 70-22  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
DIV ART 1 CAV in 70-71

Taylor, Thomas N.  
Olympia, Washington, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 69-9 69-7  
Vietnam Unit(s): 48 AHC in 70

Wadginski, Francis A. 'Ski'  
Redding, California, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 70-46  
Vietnam Unit(s):  
132 ASHC; 178 ASHC

White, Marion F. \*\*  
Perryville, Kentucky, US Army  
Flight Class(s): 59-5  
Vietnam Unit(s): 178 ASHC  
in 66-67; HHC 17 CAG in 70-71

York, Randy G. \*\*  
Saint Petersburg, Florida,  
US Army  
Flight Class(s): 67-19 67-17  
Vietnam Unit(s): 191 AHC in 68;  
C/2/17 CAV in 69-70

Zindroski, David A.  
Manhattan Beach, California,  
US Army  
Flight Class(s): 70-5 70-3  
Vietnam Unit(s): 57 AHC in 70-71

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# The Early Years...of downed pilot search and rescue missions in Vietnam



The Kaman Aircraft Company's, HH-43 "Huskie"



Lt Col Archie R Taylor, 49, with his HH-43  
April 1965, Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam

*Editor's Note: Archie Taylor sent this story to the VHPA late last year along with this explanation of what can be found here...*

**Dear David,**

My dad, Major Archie Taylor (promoted to LTC April of 1965) was in Vietnam in the early days of the Vietnam War (October 1964 to October 1965). While overseas he Commanded Detachment 4 of the Pacific Air Rescue Center (PARC) of the US Air Force, basically his detachment was responsible for coordination and recovery for downed pilots rescue missions throughout South Vietnam.

As I was going through Dad's papers after his death, I came across some interesting facts and stories about his days in Vietnam that I thought the membership would enjoy hearing about.

To begin; Stead AFB near Reno, Nevada had a long association with training Air Force Helicopter Pilots. In 1951 it was determined that the Sierra Nevada Mountains and forests would be suitable for survival training so the USAF Survival School and 3904th Composite Wing moved to Stead Air Force Base from Camp Carson, Colorado on 29 May 1951. Equipped with C-119 Flying Boxcars for training, SAC had begun the training for its personnel, teaching them how to survive if forced down in remote and/or unfriendly terrain, how to escape capture, and how to escape if captured. Things worked out well for the men flying out of Stead AFB and in fact, in January of 1958, the Air Force relocated their entire Helicopter Pilot Flight Training School to Stead AFB.

In support of the Air Rescue Service, which was seeking a better performing aircraft for combat search and rescue missions in Southeast Asia, the Helicopter School conducted an escalated training program to provide crews for the Sikorsky HH-3E helicopter then deploying to South East Asia (SEA). Between August and September 1965, crews and support personnel trained as a unit at Stead. On September 30, 1965, 117 men and six HH-3Es deployed to Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, and integrated with the three HH-43 crews of Detachment 5, 38th Air Rescue Squadron.

Detachment 4 of the 38th ARS, the one my Dad commanded, departed Stead AFB, Nevada on 18 Oct 1964 and arrived in Bien Hoa on Oct 22, at 0530 in the morning. Initially Detachment 4 maintained three HH-43F helicopters and was manned with nine officers and twenty seven airmen. Ten of these airmen were trained as fire fighters; five were para-rescue personnel and five others were Crew Chiefs for the helicopters.

*One of the "pretty cool" things I found in my Dad's papers was this summary of a rescue mission flown on August 24, 1965.....*

0705 Hudson 09 reports "mayday" at 1950N/10529E  
0710 pilot down and has beeper going.  
0711 NOTE 32 (HC-54 marginal contact)  
0728 NOTE 32 (HC-54) has coordinates  
0730 Alley CH-3C was off 0615 or 0515 there time  
    HC-54 estimates area at 0008  
0735 VOLVO HU-16 reports ground fire  
0745 Compress informs PEDRO ready as back up.  
0845 NOTE 32 (HC-54) gives CH-3H estimate to 36 as 0010  
NOTE 32 estimates 10 off coast at 0042 requests  
    SANDY be scrambled.  
0810 cover Hudson Austin Merc  
0820 CH-3C unable to land at 36 due to weather.  
0830 Rescap (?) over scene picking up beeper  
0840 CH-3C reports heading back towards NuKnom Phanon for refuel unable to land. Poor contact.  
0845 I estimate CH-3C back at NP at 1000Z  
0900 (?) HC-54 over scene and HC-3C is W of Pos  
0905 CH-3C is landing at L-46 (shoestring)  
0910 CH-3C on ground refueling  
0915 CH-3C estimates airborne 0950 and on target 1050  
0955 Alley 76 (CH-3C) estimates airborne from L-46 at 0948  
SANDY A/C (Udom A-1H estimates L-46 at 1000  
1012 SANDY and Alley estimate target at 1120  
1050 CH-3C ready to start descent  
1105 still picking up signal but no visual  
1115 visual contact  
1119 pilot picked up good condition.

*Thank you for your interest!  
Archie Taylor*

*E-mail: [REDACTED]*

# The Long Return of Warrant Officer Meade

by Joseph P. Blank

## Reader's Digest

(Reprinted with permission from the December 1970 issue of Reader's Digest)

"He was hurt so cruelly," his doctor recalls, "that life became unbearable." Then, slowly, a miracle began to unfold.

"You ought to go home," the Army neurosurgeon told Kathy Meade. "There's no point in your continuing to live here at the hospital. If your husband ever wakes from his coma—I doubt that he'll ever be able to function as a human being."

The doctor's frank appraisal stunned young Kathy, who was four months pregnant. She returned in a daze to the intensive-care room at Madigan General Hospital, Tacoma, Wash., where her husband, Chief Warrant Officer James P. Meade, Jr., 20, lay dying. A cast covered his entire trunk and badly fractured, deeply infected left leg. His fractured right ankle was in a cast. One side of his head was indented from loss of bone and showed two burr holes where Army surgeons in South Vietnam had drilled exploratively. His weight had plunged from 145 pounds to an emaciated 80.

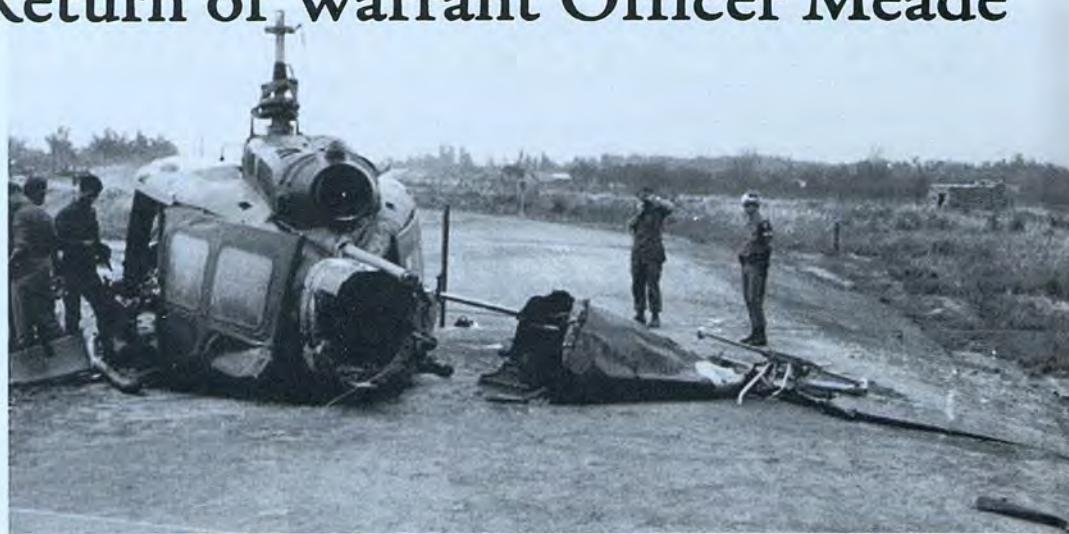
To Kathy, it seemed impossible that this pathetic figure was her husband. Only 16 weeks earlier, he had been in perfect health—and eager to reach Vietnam. The son of a career sergeant-major in the Army, he had enlisted after a year at the University of Oregon, where he had been a brilliant student and president of the freshman honor society. "I can't go on with school while men are dying out there," he had told Kathy in their frequent talks about the war. "I've got to do something to save lives, and the best way is for me to become a helicopter pilot."

Jim and Kathy were married shortly before he went to South Vietnam, where he immediately saw combat. He flew day and night, and in less than four months was shot down three times. On the third crash he drifted his falling ship into trees at an angle that exposed himself to the greatest danger and his three crewmen to the least. At impact, the broken but still-spinning rotor blades smashed through the cockpit, tore his helmet to bits, gouged out part of his skull and battered his brain. He was the only one injured.

Trapped Animal. Fifteen days after the crash Jim was wheeled into Madigan General, where a medical team headed by a Maj. George Palmer (not his real name) quickly went to work. They made repairs on his battered body, fed him nutrients intravenously, got his blood chemistry into balance. But they could do nothing about the brain damage that caused his strange coma. After a few days his eyes opened, but they remained unfocused and expressionless. Frenetically active, he had to be tied to the bed with towels. Incomprehensible animal sounds came from his throat. Kathy and Jim's mother were at his bedside throughout the day, trying to break through the coma by giving him every possible expression of love. Periodically, they removed his arm restraints and each time he tried to throw himself out of bed, biting, snarling, growling. Unable to express himself like a human being, he behaved like a trapped animal.

Major Palmer could offer no hope. "We were losing him," he recalls, "and I had the feeling that he wanted to go. He had been so cruelly hurt that life was unbearable." Jim's mother, a surgery-room nurse in a civilian hospital, also recognized that her son was sinking. "You and I know that he is dying," she told Major Palmer. "Can't you try something else?"

The major had concluded that Jim remained alive only because of the loving attention of his wife and mother. What might help to lift the coma, he thought, would be the additional care and concern of others. Perhaps the answer could be found in the hospital's



The shoot down that led to the Readers' Digest story featured here occurred of May 8, 1967 and was James' first mission after being shot down and wounded in a crash that happened on April 27, 1967. This picture shows what was left of the chopper that James was flying that day along with his best friend in Vietnam, CWO Billy Seale.

orthopedic Ward 13, which housed some of the Vietnam War's most seriously disabled amputees. "Ward 13 had a fine spirit," Major Palmer later explained. "The men there, having fought depression and emotional withdrawal, were more capable of helping Jim than all the hospital's doctors and nurses. Ward 13 was his only chance, although a remote one."

"Help Us." First Lt. Carole Burke, head nurse on the ward, told its occupants only that a young chopper pilot with a head injury, who could neither talk nor respond, was being admitted. She asked nothing of them. She knew they had a great respect for these pilots: each, in fact, had been carried from the battlefield to a hospital by Army helicopter.

The men glanced up casually as Jim was wheeled into the ward. Two nurses removed the towel restraints from his raw wrists, then posted themselves on either side of his bed. In a few minutes a patient in a cast hobbled over. "I'll stay with him," he said. Soon two other patients drifted by and began a conversation; although Jim seemed oblivious to it, he was included. During the next 24 hours the men lounged around Jim's bed, spoon-fed him meals, played the radio, bantered, kidded with the nurses. All the while Jim was treated as if he were "there"—aware, participating.

After a few days, Jim's hyperactivity—the biting and writhing—subsided. He took long naps, curled like a fetus. It may have been that he was preparing to be "born" again, Major Palmer surmised, as hitherto unused cells in the right side of the brain were being activated to take over the functions of the destroyed cells in the left side. When he grew restless in bed, nurses and patients moved him into a wheelchair and pushed him into the semicircle of amputees around the television set. Want to watch a ball game, Jim?" one asked. No response. "Want some ice cream, Jim?" No response.

"I—Love—You." More than a month went by while the men eagerly watched Jim for any sign of change. Then one day a veteran told Nurse Burke, "I think he looked at me. For just a flash."

Gradually Jim's eyes began to focus, to look at things, at people. And now, as he began emerging from his coma, puzzlement replaced the empty, unseeing expression. Neither he nor the doctors realized at this time that the chopper blades had destroyed a portion of his brain's memory cells. Like an infant, Jim was looking at a world he couldn't recognize. Actually, he was more helpless than an infant. He couldn't talk, laugh or cry. The pain in his left leg was deep and searing, but he had no way to express it. As the days passed, and a part of his intelligence returned, he became convinced that his inability to communicate meant he was dying. He sank into deep depression.

But Ward 13 would have none of it. Prodding, cajoling, they forced him into action. He learned to nod or shake his head in answer to questions. He learned to eat on his own power—by reaching erratically for the food and throwing it toward his mouth. He wanted to talk. He worked his mouth, grimaced, pushed, fought. But the words simply wouldn't come out.

Then, early one Monday, it happened. Nurse Burke entered Ward 13 with a cheery "Good morning, gentlemen." As she passed Jim's wheelchair she thought she heard him answer, "Goo' moorn." Was it wishful hearing? His eyes told her that he had made the sounds. That same day, he greeted Kathy with three barely understandable and obviously rehearsed words. "I—love—you," he said.

Her heart jumped. She repeated the words to him. Then she pointed to her expanding middle. "Baby," she said. He tried furiously to say the word. He couldn't. He tried other words. They wouldn't come. Then he went limp, as if to say, "Why try? It's hopeless." Kathy leaned over him. "You can't give up," she whispered. "We need you. You're going to make it." Then she excused herself, went to the ladies' room and bawled, out of hope and fear, and sympathy for her husband in his terribly struggle.

**Making It.** Nothing came easy to Jim as he fought to "grow up." To read, he first had to relearn his ABCs. Then he progressed to children's books of the "Look, Jane, there's Spot" variety. His greatest problem was making his legs, hands and voice respond to his brain's commands. It took him nearly a year to go from scattering food across the table to cutting his meat and bringing it accurately to his mouth. Writing, even simple words like "cat," was an ordeal. He would forget how to spell the word or how to print the letters. He couldn't write in a straight line, make the letters the same size or keep one from overlapping another. But, finally, there it was—a legible C.A.T.

It took Jim nearly three years of sweat, strain and determination to walk without supports. From a wheelchair, and still wearing a leg cast, he moved to crutches. One afternoon he joined other disabled veterans who were bouncing a ball off a handball wall. He dropped his crutches to see if he could maintain balance and move just a little. He reached for the ball—and fell. Choking back tears of frustration, he picked up his crutches, went around to the back of the gym and pounded his head against the wall.

His father understood his feelings. "Jim," he told him, "you've done a lot of things that most people thought you'd never be able to do. I know you can learn to walk. Let's get to work on it." At his father's home, where Jim now spent periodic leaves, the elder Meade built a 30-foot-long wood platform with high parallel railings. Using the railing for support, Jim tried to walk. He fell, got up, fell—and kept falling until, exhausted, he could no longer pull himself up. Undaunted, he crawled up and down the platform, trying to coordinate the movements of his legs and arms. He performed these exercises for weeks until he could crawl as well as a normal 2 year-old infant. Back to the rails, now he was able to take some steps without falling. "I've got to make it," he told himself. "I've got to." And his father, beside him every minute, assured him, "You will, you will."

From the parallel bars he went to canes, walking, weaving, staggering, falling. Slowly, over the months, he learned to maintain his balance, to walk in a straight line, to maneuver street curbs. In February 1970 he walked in Ward 13 with a big grin on his face—and no canes. Thirty months after one authority had labeled him a "hopeless vegetable," Jim Meade was clearly making it.

From D to B. In September 1969 he had taken another long step, enrolling the two-year Mt. Hood Community College on the outskirts of Portland. It was tough. He was self-conscious about his limping gait and occasionally slurred speech. He couldn't take notes fast enough. Homework took him three times longer than the average student. "I felt so dumb, so worthless," Jim recalls. "Why, I even had to learn to add, subtract and multiply. It was terrible not to be able to keep up."

He became despondent. "Then he remembered what people had done for him," recalls his college counselor, psychologist Patrick Loughry. "He developed an ambition to help others, as he had been helped. His determination returned, and he changed re-

markably. In eight months he rose from a D to a B student." Jim received his diploma from Mt. Hood in June 1970 and is now studying for a degree in psychology at Portland State University. "I want to get into work where I can use what I've learned to help people," Jim explains. "A person who is deeply hurt feels very lonely. It's hard to survive this feeling. But love can make the difference. Even in my coma I must have felt the love of my family and ward mates, and felt my love for them. If I hadn't, there would have been no reason to go on. Surely, I would have died."

**VHPA Life Member Robert "Russell" Jones, who obtained the permission from Reader's Digest for this reprint, adds the following:** For the record, CW2 Jim Meade was shot down on May 8, 1967. Jim was flying with the 187th Assault Helicopter Company under the Blackhawk callsign in those days, in less than four months of duty in Vietnam, Jim was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts, and ten Air Medals.

When I flew with the 196th Light Infantry Brigade in 1968, CSM James Meade was a passenger of mine on many occasions. We often talked about the condition of his son, Jim, who, at that time, was still very much hospitalized in Tacoma. After serving with the 196th, CSM Meade went on to serve as Americal Division CSM at Chu Lai. Another son of CSM Meade, Lt. David Meade, was killed in action in Vietnam in May 1970, David was serving with the special forces of the 173rd Airborne when he was killed.

This last summer I had the opportunity to stop and visit with former CW2 Jim Meade, and his youngest brother Tim, in Portland. I am happy to report that Jim went on to earn his Ph.D. as a clinical psychologist and then worked for the Veterans Administration as an outreach therapist. He is currently in private practice, providing counseling to both able-bodied and disabled people, older adults and families.

James' newest book, *Making Your Own Reality: A Survival Story*, has just been published by West Bow press, a division of Thomas Nelson publishing. A full review of the book and ordering information appear on page 18 of this Aviator in John Penny's Book Review column.

**James Meade may be contacted at:** [REDACTED]

**Russ Jones, the Member who sent us this story, may be contacted at:** [REDACTED]



James Meade in his graduation photo from Flight Class 66-21.



James Meade, Ph.D. on left, Robert "Russell" Jones in middle and Tim Meade on right. Portland, Oregon, 2013

# Letters to the Editor...

## To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

Andrea Boyle, widow of Jerry Boyle (Apache 24) passed on notice of the death of USAF Forward Air Controllers (FAC) Chip Wolfe who passed away on 22 May 2013. Chip was a FAC that provided the 1st of the 9th Cav with close air support and he flew under the Rash 11 callsign. If I recall correctly, these men flew OV-10s.

I do not recall ever meeting Chip Wolfe; and in fact I did not recognize the name. Nevertheless, we all remember how sweet it was when a Rash FAC came up on the air and let us know fast-movers were on the way.

If anyone has specific memories of Chip Wolfe, to include photos and war stories, please send them to me and I will forward to the larger list of squadron veterans.

Jim Kurtz, Apache 03, 1970-71

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## To the new President of the VHPA

Hello Moon – I just wanted to say hello to our new president and tell you how much I enjoyed your column in the latest edition of the "Aviator". Your skill as a writer surprised me for a guy who claims he hates to write. But your observation about writing is a better option than taking an H-37 (or any bird) into a hot LZ is certainly true!

I enjoy reading the "Aviator" and hearing about different Army units and people who made up the bulk of the helo forces and ops in Vietnam. It was also great to read about the Navy rescue pilot, Lt. Dennis Petersen, who with his crew were lost in a rescue attempt in North Vietnam those many years ago and the Marine's article about Navy medics. We were all brothers in that war back then, and still are today.

As a former Air Force helo pilot, I'd like to see an article now and then about some of our people or squadrons who contributed to the overall effort as well. As you probably know, we had units involved in combat rescue, special ops, tactical intel, and other helo ops who all have stories to tell.

In any event, I wish you every success during your tenure as president and a sincere "welcome home brother".

Vince Ziccardi

Life Member and former USAF Combat Rescue Pilot

San Antonio, TX

**Editor's Note** – I am a full supporter of stories from all the services so don't hesitate to send us anything you think would be of interest to our Members! David Adams, Editor of the VHPA Aviator

## To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

I just received this letter from my son, Daniel, who is on a Fulbright Scholarship in Malaysia and I thought it might be of interest to other VHPA Members. Daniel was afforded the opportunity to travel outside Malaysia and he both chose Cambodia and Vietnam as his destinations.

Dan Jones, Pink Panther 13

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

*Dear Dad, and any friends or family you might forward this to, I want to tell you about my tour guide and now friend, Hoa, who I met in Dong Ha, Vietnam*

It wasn't by accident, I spent a lot of time researching the best way to tour the DMZ area of Vietnam. Nevertheless, I think I struck gold and I wanted to share what I found with any veterans or families of veterans who have any thoughts of seeing Vietnam post-war.

You'll find plenty of Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) soldiers wandering around central Vietnam and offering their services, most of them just using their motorbikes as taxi services. You come to recognize them, like Vietnam veterans on the American side, they all seem to begin to look like each other. These guys, at least the ones I came across, still recognize and appreciate

the bond they share with Americans.

I found Hoa through an upstart, small touring agency in Dong Ha. He's relatively new there, having been laid off by a government-controlled tour agency still bent on punishing ARVN soldiers and their families. As he told it to me, he was one of the better English-speakers and knew the area better than most, so he was retained among a mostly NVA staff until they could learn what he knew, at which point he was let go.

Hoa is an absolute gentleman with remarkable English for a man of such humble roots. He wants, more than anything, for his clients to be satisfied, and is constantly asking how the trip can be improved. Any spur of the moment desires to detour from the scheduled route he is more than happy to oblige, and did so for us several times. Hoa is a door-holding, "watch your head", mild-mannered anti-Communist who has endured a year at an NVA reeducation camp. His family, he believes, including his children, are still being targeted by the government, and they all have difficulty finding work.

Despite all of that, Hoa is a cheerful soul with a sense of humor who is happy to have a few drinks with you or leave you on your own if you so desire, though I think anyone would prefer his company.

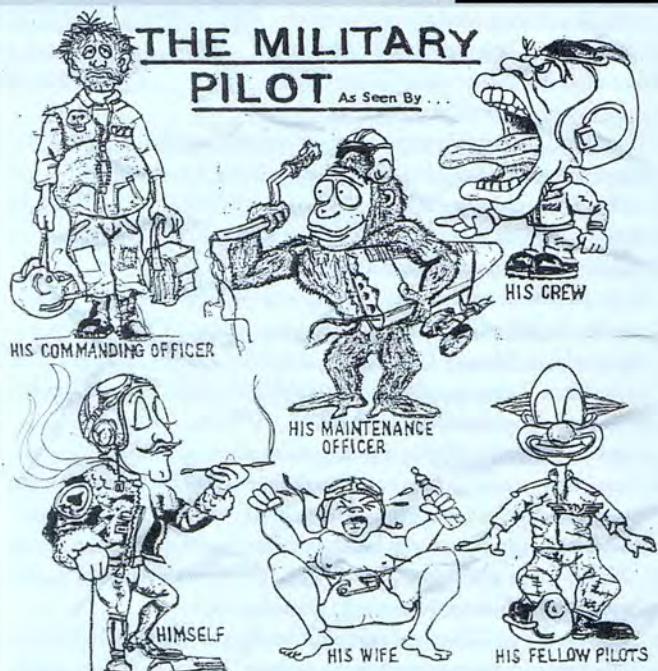
It's my hope that Hoa can begin operating on his own, and keep a little more of the money his company earns from his services so that he can better support his family. He speaks English (although I suspect his spoken English is better than his written) and is easy to find in Dong Ha because he'll pick you up at the train station. He can be reached at: [REDACTED]

For anyone on the fence about returning to Vietnam, I can say from my own experience, untainted by the memories of war, that Vietnam is an incredibly beautiful place. I dare say, pound for pound the most beauty I've ever seen in such a relatively small area of the world. The people there are excellent, and an entrepreneurial spirit there radiates through the dissipating clouds of communism in a way I have not seen in any of the other communist countries I've visited. Somewhere not far down the road, the Vietnamese people won't put up with this aging politburo anymore and they may end up with a free enterprise system in Vietnam after all. You won't be disappointed if you go.

Best,

Dan Jones Jr.

E-Mail: [REDACTED]



Don't forget, the deadline for our "LIGHTER SIDE OF VIETNAM" issue is January 28, 2014

*To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,*

First I'd like to thank George VanRiper for his photo of the perfect 'cross X' configuration of the skid tubes while in formation flight.

I have to admit that this photo is the very first time I have ever seen that elusive, almost mythical phenomena. I had heard of it, but have never actually witnessed it first hand. Of course, this is understandable. Formation flight can be a difficult maneuver even for the best of pilots on a good day, so you can imagine my chagrin of having to attempt it with the crew chief and gunner yelling 'trim...trim...trim' all the time (I never figured that one out...and with the wind in their mics it was hard to understand them anyhow), and with the AC going on and on and on about 'airspeed....altitude....airspeed....altitude'. Well, hell, that'd unnerve anybody trying to stay close to another helicopter while in flight (another brilliant Army idea), and while listening to FM and VHF radios....and while trying to tune in some tunes on AFVN....all at the



same time!

Fortunately, I moved to gunships where a trail formation was more reasonable in its scope. We never had to worry about left side, right side or any stupid 'X' marks the spot...we never had to worry too much about airspeed and altitude either. That worked out well for me.

Anyhow, again, thanks for the photo...of course, I have seen photos of Big Foot and UFOs and I don't put a lot of stock in them. For all I know, this was faked as well.

*Ron Smith*

*Class 69-15 Flt B-4*

*129th AHC, Cobra Platoon, Lane AHP, 1969-1970*

*E-Mail: [REDACTED]*



# "Looking For"

## *LOOKING FOR....the man who was looking for MAJ Whitehead and CPT Gibson*

At the SF Reunion a member gave a piece of paper with two names that he wanted help locating: MAJ Dorsey Whitehead and CPT Clarence Gibson.

Well I've done that but what our member didn't do, was give me his name and contact info so I could get back to him. Please contact me at [REDACTED] or membership @vhpa.org and I'll be glad to pass on the information you were looking for.

*Regards, Mike Sheuerman  
Membership Chairman*

## *Looking For Help Finding Old Classmates or Fellow Military Pilot?*

Looking for an old stick buddy from Flight School, trying to locate a guy you flew with in Vietnam or maybe a pilot you served with after your tour in SE Asia or in the Reserves or National Guard? Let me help you find that guy.

For starters, go to the VHPA website, click on member services, click on online directory. If he's listed there, then try and contact him with the info listed. If the data is out of date contact me via email or phone call, and give me all you have on the guy and I'll do the rest. Hey, it's my job as MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN and I really like my job.

Why will I do all this for you? Two things - 1) I get to help a fellow VHPA member and 2) I know YOU will help me recruit the guy to join VHPA, so we all three win.

*Looking forward to helping you find your friend -  
Mike Sheuerman, Membership Chairman.*

*E-mail: [REDACTED] or member-  
ship@vhpa.org  
or phone [REDACTED] or 1-800-505-8472*

## *Looking For....Help with project for the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Gentlemen,*

I am Robert Sandow, Vice President of the Mount Gambier Returned and Service League based in Mount Gambier South Australia, and Secretary of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association.

*I am asking for your assistance in several ways...*

First, I would like to speak with anyone who worked or flew with Lt. Tony Casadio M.I.D, DFC (United States) in Vietnam.

Tony was a Mount Gambier, Australia lad and a Royal Australian Navy pilot who operated with the United States Army Experimental Military Unit (EMU). He was a section leader in the Armed Helicopter Platoon of the 135th Assault Helicopter Company, United States Army Viet Nam. Lt. Casadio and his crew died as a result of crashing whilst under fire in the Black Horse or Bear Cat regions of Viet Nam.

I would be very pleased to receive any information/pictures etc. from any of you members that can add to the continuing story of our local hero.

Next, the Australian government, I presume in cooperation with your government, recently allocated six Huey Helicopters to not for profit organizations in Australia for display and commemorative purposes. Our Association's previous manager campaigned on our behalf to obtain one of the Huey's to mount in our community in honor of all of our local Vietnam Veterans, including Lt. Tony Casadio. Unfortunately we missed obtaining one of the Huey's, because I am told, of a poorly prepared application.

I believe that if we had presented our case for one of the Huey's a little better and primarily as a memorial for Tony, we would have been successful. Personally I cannot think of a more fitting memorial to Lt. Tony Casadio than a Huey placed on display that was painted complete with his platoon's colors and markings.

Because I feel so strongly about this project, I am appealing to your Members in the hopes that someone out there knows where we can now go to present our case for a Huey as a fitting memorial to Tony.



*Thank you for your time and for your consideration,  
Robert Sandow*

*E-Mail: [REDACTED]*



# “Looking For”

## *Looking for....wounded co-pilot....*

In 1966 I was crew chief door gunner with 117th AHC. Around the beginning of October of that year, while on a mission in support of Korean troops, our copilot was shot in leg. We landed in a rice paddy where another ship landed, we carried our wounded copilot to that ship and returned to our downed helicopter to wait for evacuation.

Major Ketzler was our pilot that day, but I am now trying to find out the date of the incident, the name of the copilot and how he came out of the accident. I believe he was a warrant officer who was new in country at the time.

Thank you,  
Dave Dunbar  
[REDACTED]

## *Looking For....pilot from the Starblazers of the 61st AHC*

I am trying to make contact with a member of the 61st AHC who served in the gun section (Starblazers) during the period of Dec 69 - Feb 1970.

One of their pilots conducted a medivac mission in his gun ship in January of 1970, and members of the platoon that he medevaced their friend from now wants to contact him and the rest of the crew -- I was an ad hoc gunner on that mission, but I seen to recall the AC in question was nicknamed Wild Bill.

I was in the 173d at the time and not a member of the 61st aviation company but I can recall two of the other pilots of their gun platoon, one named Wood (or Woods) and another named Durham. If you are any of these men, or can help me make contact with Wild Bill himself, please e-mail me!

Darrell Moe Elmore  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## *Looking For.....Georgia Life Flight helicopter pilot*

I'm trying to find a Vietnam helicopter pilot that flew a life flight (or other medical evacuation copter) 24 years ago.

My brother was almost fatally injured while rafting in the Chattahoochee River in Atlanta, Georgia and after the accident, the pilot we are looking for flew him to Kennestone hospital in Cobb county Georgia. This was 24 years ago.

Sadly my brother eventually passed on six years ago this month, and now my parents and I would like to thank that Vietnam pilot for all those extra years he gave us to be together. All I know is his nickname was "Mad Dog". We were later told that other pilots wouldn't even attempt to land where my brother lay injured on the river that day, but "Mad Dog" did and it saved his life.

If you have any ideas or suggestions of how I can locate the pilot so my family can send our appreciation, please let me know.

Kelley Burnett

Kelley & Chad Burnett: [REDACTED]

## *Looking For....pilot who went down on a MTF in 1971*

My name is Terry Burns, I served in Vietnam with D Co., 101st avn. bn., 101st Abn. Div. at Phu Bai. During the summer of 1971 one of our cobras went down while on a test flight not far from the airfield, fortunately there were no injuries or fatalities. One of the men from our maintenance platoon, John Barnaby, was riding in the front seat but now I'm trying to find out the name of the pilot and the tail number of the aircraft.

I know there's not much information here but it's all I have, any help from the members of your Association would be greatly appreciated.

Terry Burns

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## *Looking For.....anyone who might have known my father Ranal Culp*

I am looking for men who might have known my father, Ranal Culp. When he died 10 years ago, I got in contact with some of those men and they were kind enough to send me some emails with stories about my Dad.

Unfortunately those e-mails were lost when my computer crashed some years ago as I was really hoping to have some stories about him to pass down to my kids. They were small when he died and too young to hear his stories, but they are young adults now and ready.

He served with the Commandos in 68/69 and the 128 AHC in 70/71. If any of you out there are once again able to help me, please contact me at the below e-mail address. Thanks!

Amy Lindley

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## *Looking For.....a Member of the VHPA missing two X-L, Tee-shirts from this year's Reunion*

I am looking for the member that ordered (2) XL SF Reunion T-shirts back in mid - May. I think you are a LIFE member, you live in South Florida and the last four numbers of your credit card are 9601 with a card expiration date of 1/16. I wrote your entire CC number down BUT failed to write down your name.

YOU HAVE NOT BEEN BILLED but I have your shirts ready to ship as soon as I hear from you. PLEASE forgive your old Membership Chairman, he had a SENIOR MOMENT!!!

Mike Sheuerman, Old Membership Chairman  
Phone 1-800-505-8472, E-Mail [Membership@vhpa.org](mailto:Membership@vhpa.org),  
Cell phone [REDACTED] or home e-mail: [REDACTED]

## *LOOKING FOR....the man who was looking for MAJ Whitehead and CPT Gibson*

At the SF Reunion a member gave a piece of paper with two names that he wanted help locating; MAJ Dorsey Whitehead and CPT Clarence Gibson.

Well I've done that but what our member didn't do, was give me his name and contact info so I could get back to him. Please contact me at [REDACTED] or [membership@vhpa.org](mailto:membership@vhpa.org) and I'll be glad to pass on the information you were looking for.

Regards, Mike Sheuerman  
Membership Chairman

## *Looking For...*

I worked in both the California Chapter North (CCN) booth in the Vendor Room and also at our MOC during last months San Francisco Reunion.

A member of the VHPA somehow accidentally left a brand new, size LARGE Reunion T-Shirt in one of our storage boxes!

Let me know who you are and I'll be glad to send it your way.

Thanks,  
Mike Nord

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

# TAPS

**ANDERSON, Raymond Dale** graduated flight training with Flight Class 67-3 & 67-5, flew in Vietnam with the 605th TC Co 1967-68 and the 281st AHC in 1967 under both the Mardi Gras and Pipesmoke callsigns.

Raymond Dale "Ray" Anderson, 68, passed away in Lubbock, Texas on July 15, 2013. Ray was born on Aug. 1, 1944 in Oakland, Calif., he served in the U.S. Army from 1965 to 1970 receiving honors as a decorated soldier in Vietnam. He then served his country again in the Army National Guard from 1975 to 1980. He received multiple prestigious medals and distinguished awards during his times of service.

He married the love of his life, Patricia Smith, on Nov. 27, 1976. He continued his passion for work as a helicopter pilot, flying the United States Geologist into Mt. St Helens during active eruptions in the attempt to capture real life images of the volcano. He also flew the filmography crew for the The Fires of Kuwait on IMAX and finally the last 21 years with the medical flight crews of Aero Care and Life Star, helping save lives.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia Anderson of Lubbock, one sister, two daughters, one son, 14 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. The family suggests memorials be sent to Raymond D. Anderson Memorial Fund at First United Bank in Lubbock, Texas, proceeds will be given to the Joe Arrington Cancer Center to aid others in their fight with Cancer. To leave online condolences please visit [www.resthavenfuneralhome.com](http://www.resthavenfuneralhome.com).

**BEDARD, Dennis B.** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 67-19, flew in Vietnam with B Co, 4th Avn, 4th INF (1968) and with C Troop, 7/17th Cav (1971-72) under the Gambler 11 and White 6 callsigns.



MAJ. DENNIS B. BEDARD (RET.), 70, passed away on Dec. 4, 2012, at home in South Burlington, CT. He was born in Waterbury, Conn and after graduating from Sacred Heart High School in Waterbury, Conn., in 1959, Dennis joined the U.S. Air Force, changing service four years later to join the U.S. Army. Dennis served two tours in the Vietnam War as a helicopter pilot, receiving the Bronze Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, and numerous other honors during his time in the military. He retired from the Army as a Major while stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. Dennis earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Cameron University, and an MBA from the University of Hartford.

After retiring from the military, he worked for many years at Sikorsky Aircraft, General Electric, and General Dynamics. Dennis loved to travel and over the years he was an avid Formula 1 race car driver, motorcyclist, downhill skier, and fisherman. Some of his favorite days were spent skiing at Jay Peak and fly fishing in Yellowstone National Park with his two daughters.

He is survived by his two daughters, one son in law, two brothers and numerous nieces, nephews and other family members. Dennis will be laid to rest, with full military honors, in a private ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

Member Reg Harris, who sent us this TAPS entry, went on to add "I flew with Dennis in 1968 when he was with B/4th Avn. 4th Inf. Division in Pleiku; his call sign was Gambler 11. Dennis flew out of Pleiku from 1967-1968."

**COLLARD, Chauncey** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 64 & 65, flew in Vietnam and Laos with Air America from 1965-1975.

Chauncey Collard closed his flight plan on 11 June 2012. Chauncey was 92 years young at the time of his death.

Chauncey started flying in 1933 as a civilian pilot. During WW II he was a LT in the U.S. Navy. In Southeast Asia, he flew for Air America from 1965 to 1971 in Vietnam, then from 1971 thru 1974 in Laos and finally back to Vietnam in 1974-1975 where he was the oldest helicopter pilot (55) performing in the evacuation of Saigon.

During the evacuation, Chauncey was able to get his wife and her family out of Vietnam before the fall of Saigon. On the wall at his home, Chauncey had framed a "Blank Check" along with a letter from one of his Brother-In-Laws that said he could cash this check for however much he wanted, and any time he decided to. The poster was one that Chauncey had made up when he met and married his wife Hai after they left Vietnam.

Chauncey always had some good war stories to tell and was a good friend. We will miss him.

*The above TAPS entry was sent to us by the President of the Arizona Chapter, Bill Sorenson*

**COLLINS, Richard F.** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 57-11, flew in Vietnam with the 8th TC Co 1962-63 and C/228th ASHB, 1st Cav Div in 1967-68 under the Manhunter and the Cowboy callsigns.

CW4 (Ret) Richard F. Collins, 80, of Clayhatchee, AL, passed away on July 3, 2013 in Defuniak Springs, FL. He was born February 22, 1933 in Pelican, LA, he graduated from Mobile County High School in Grand Bay, AL in 1952 and joined the United States Army serving in the 82nd Airborne Division.

He later attended Warrant Officer Candidate School and Flight School where he was the Honor Graduate. He was a fixed-wing and helicopter pilot and served in a variety of assignments including Germany, Korea and Vietnam. He was awarded several citations including the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross. Richard married his wife, Barbara Manning in June 1955 and they celebrated 58 years of marriage this year. Richard was a faithful member and deacon of First Baptist Church of Level Plains and a proud member of the Wiregrass Camp of the Gideon's.

Richard was preceded in death by a brother, survivors include his wife, Barbara (Manning) Collins, two sons, six grandchildren, one brother, and many nieces and nephews. You may sign the register book or send condolences to the family at our website: [www.searcyfuneralhome.com](http://www.searcyfuneralhome.com)

**COYLE, Marcus W. II**

Ret. Colonel Marcus W. Coyle II, 87, of Midland, Georgia passed away peacefully on June 2, 2013 surrounded by his loving family. He was born in Springfield, IL, he grew up in Detroit, MI and joined the United States Army at age of 18 and ended up serving 27 years of active duty.



He entered the United States Army in 1944 as a Medic, while serving in WW II; he participated in the liberation of Dachau, also served in Korea, and 2 tours in Vietnam in which he was commander of the 61st Aviation Company. He was a recipient of many commendations including a Purple Heart; 1st in class for Officers Candidate School and later inducted into the OCS Hall of Fame. He was a Jump Master in the 82nd Airborne, an Infantry Intelligence Officer, Pilot and Aviator Commander. He retired in Columbus, GA in 1971.

Col. Coyle had a passion for the art of growing Bonsai and maintained a beautiful Bonsai garden for many years. After his retirement, he continued his education receiving an additional degree from Columbus State University in Botany.

Col. Coyle is preceded in death by an infant son and one brother. He was an incredible father, grandpa and a role model for all; survivors include his wife, Myra Lee Norris Coyle of 65 Years, four children, nine grandchildren and six great grandchildren. The family requests that donations be made to the National Infantry Foundation, 1775 Legacy Way, Suite 220, Columbus, GA 31903.

**GOOCH, Donald Ray** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 71-4, flew in Vietnam with F Troop, 9th Cav (1969-70) under the Saber Red callsign.



Retired Major U.S. Army, Donald Ray Gooch, age 74, of Dahlonega, Georgia, died June 12, 2013.

He was a helicopter pilot in the United States Army in which he was Commander five times; once with the missile site in Olathe, Kan., twice in Germany, and twice in Vietnam. He retired from his military duties to Dahlonega with his wife of 56 years. Mr. Gooch was a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Lumpkin County. He is also preceded in death by many brothers and sisters.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Lou Jones Gooch; one son, four daughters, six grandchil-

# TAPS

and a number of other relatives. In lieu of flowers, please make a contribution to the Wounded Warrior Project at [www.WoundedWarriorProject.org](http://www.WoundedWarriorProject.org). Online condolences may be made at [www.banisterfuneralhome.net](http://www.banisterfuneralhome.net)

**JONES, Glen Warren** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 55-F, flew in Vietnam with the 498th Med Co in 1965-66 under both the Dustoff 5 and Dustoff 6 callsigns.

Ret. LTC Glen Warren "Bill" Jones, 87, passed away July 17, 2010 at home surrounded by his loving family. Bill served his country and his family first by fighting in WWII and then he became a Medivac Helicopter Pilot and served in both Korea and Vietnam. He received the Purple Heart, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Air Medal, the Bronze Star and other medals. He served two tours in Germany 1951-1954 and 1961-1964 and received two additional Distinguished Flying Crosses for flying in the Iran and Greece earthquake disasters.

Bill was a Mason, Shriner, member of MOAA, American Legion and Dustoff Association. He was a member of Eleventh Avenue Church. Bill loved to fish and spend time with his family. He was a loving and caring husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, who will be carried in his family's memory daily.

Bill is survived by his wife of 60 years, Elizabeth "Janie" Jones, one son, two daughters, seven grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren and five cousins.

**KAUTH, Dan Harold** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 59-3, flew in Vietnam with C/229th Avn, 1st Cav Div 1965-66; the 117th AHC 1966; the 45th Eng Grp 1968; and the 18th Eng BDE in 1968-69.

Dan Harold Kauth of Weatherford, Texas passed away on June 18, 2013. Dan was born Aug 20, 1933, in Salina, Kan., he graduated from high school from Bavaria, Kan., in 1951. Dan married Ella Kohl on April 11, 1956, in Furth, Germany, Dan and Ella had been married 49 years when Ella died in 2005. They had one son, Jeffery, and one grandson, Clayton, whom Dan adored; he also leaves behind two sisters and one brother.

Dan served 20 years in the U.S. Army, serving tours of duty in Vietnam and Germany. He was a helicopter pilot and flight instructor. During his years of service, he received numerous awards and honors. He was proud of his service to his country. After retirement from the military, Dan resided at Possum Kingdom Lake before finally moving to Weatherford.

Dan owned and operated Kauth Construction Company. Dan had many friends with whom he was generous with both his time and resources. Dan was a Shriner and active in community activities. He was an avid NASCAR fan.

**LAUMEYER, Norman G.** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 55-1. Flew in Vietnam with the 121st AHC (1963-64) and the 11th CAG, 1st Cav Div (1967-68).

Lieutenant Colonel Norman George Laumeyer, US Army (Retired), 84, of Enterprise, AL died on Wednesday, August 7, 2013 at Medical Center Enterprise with his wife, Barbara, at his bedside.

Lt. Col. Laumeyer was born in Long Prairie, MN, he graduated from Omaha University in Omaha, NE with a bachelor's degree in education in 1962, then from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, CA with a master's degree in systems management in 1969. He enlisted in the Minnesota National Guard in 1946, in the Air Force in 1947, and in the Army in 1951 to attend Infantry Officer Candidate School. Following graduation and commissioning, he completed airborne and Ranger school. He graduated from flight school in 1955, and served two combat tours in Vietnam in the 1960's. While serving the military, he earned many awards including the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, and 16 Air Medals. While in the military, he served in Japan, Iceland, Germany, and numerous installations in the United States including Fort Lewis WA, where he and Barbara met in 1955. He retired in 1970 with 23 years of service as a Master Army Aviator with 3400 hours. Upon military retirement, Norman worked in Civil Service as a training specialist from 1972 until 1994 at Fort Rucker where he earned a Superior Civilian Service Award.

The Laumeyers lived in Daleville for 40 years, and he provided volunteer service to his community where he was president of the Daleville School Board. He was a charter member of AAAA and was president of the Fort Rucker chapter of AUSA in 1992.

He is survived by his loving wife of 57 years, Barbara B. Laumeyer and five children. He is also survived by seven grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, three brothers and one sister. The family requests donations be made to the Army Aviation Museum Foundation, 617 Andrews Ave., Ft. Rucker, AL 36362, where he served as a tour guide for many years.

**LEONARD, John Franklin** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 55-L, flew in Vietnam with the 57th TC Co (1962); the 611st TC Co (1963); JUSMAG Thailand (1964-65); the 243rd ASHC (1967); and the 712 TC Det. (1968). His primary callsign was Boxcar 5

John Franklin Leonard Jr., 80, passed away peacefully on Father's Day, June 16, 2013, surrounded by all of his children and in the loving arms of his devoted wife of almost 62 years, Mary Leonard.

He lived an abundant life, having joined the

United States Army at the age of 15, and he retired in 1977 as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 after nearly 29 years of service. John married Mary Gillan, on July 5, 1951, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Baldwinsville, N.Y. His Army career took him and his family all over the world including Germany, Thailand, the Panama Canal Zone, and Iran, as well as numerous stateside assignments.

He began his career in the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, NC. In 1955 he went to Fort Rucker, AL for Warrant Officer Flight School class L-55. He served two tours in Vietnam, earning two Distinguished Flying Crosses, and Bronze Star with 'V' device for heroism. Sikorsky awarded him the Helicopter Rescue Certificate – the "Winged S" emblem in 1958. John took great pride in serving in the Army and living life as a soldier. John's greatest times of joy and satisfaction in the Army were when he was flying.

John was a member of the Warrant Officer Association, he was also Life Member #199 of the VHPA and at the time of his death, he had been a member of the Otter Caribou Assn for 11 years. He made his home in Sierra Vista, AZ in 1976 when he retired. He loved hunting, bowling, square dancing, racketball, going on cruises, playing darts and watching the Diamondbacks. He passed on his love of the outdoors to his children and grandchildren. He also adored the poodles that were his lifelong companions.

John was born in Torrence, Calif., in 1932 and is survived by his wife, his five children, his seven great grandchildren and many close friends and fellow pilots.

Thanks to member Don Joyce for informing us about this loss.

**LEONARD, Perry D.**, CW4 Leonard Perry D. Call Sign: Good Nature 5 Units: 57 TC Co ('61-'62) 56 TC Co ('62) 56 TC Co ('67-'68)

Perry graduated flight training with flight class 1958-5, servicing in the Korean conflict and completed two tours in Vietnam. In returning State's side, Perry served as a helicopter flight instructor based at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

Perry served active military service for 27 years and retired as a Chief Warrant Officer (CW4) in 1974. His numerous commendations include the Bronze Star, Air Metal, Army Accommodation Metal and Joint Service Commendation Metal.

Perry passed at the age of 84 on April 21st 2013, surrounded by his loving family. He is survived by his wife, Cathy, his children Peggy, Wanda and Steve, sisters Celia and Myrtis, grandchildren Andy, Ian, Justin and Ethan. He was buried at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery with full military honors.

After retiring from the Army, Perry worked in the



# TAPS

After retiring from the Army, Perry worked in the San Francisco Bay Area in logistics management in the high tech industry. Finally hanging his retirement hat in 1984, Perry spent many days traveling, bird watching, keeping up with history and politics, and enjoying his vegetable garden. Perry and Cathy traveled the Alaskan Highway via car in 2005 and often traveled to Japan to visit with Cathy's family. His greatest joy in retirement was quizzing his grandchildren on current events.

*This TAPS entry sent to us by his son, Steve Leonard,  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]*

**LOCKE, Timothy S.** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 69-28, flew in Vietnam with D Troop, 1/10th Cav, 4th ID (1969-70) under the Shamrock 24 callsign.



Timothy S. Locke, passed away on June 18, 2013. A long-time resident of Puyallup, Washington following his service as a helicopter pilot in the Army, Tim flew for the Washington National Guard and Alaska Airlines before retiring to Saddle Mountain near Spokane.

He is survived by his beloved wife Carol (Nash); two children, one brother and two sisters as well as several nieces, nephews and in-laws. He will be greatly missed. Burial was held at the Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent, WA. The family is requesting donations be made to the Wounded Warrior Project.

**MCKAY, Lawrence Edward Jr.** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 60-3FW, flew in Vietnam with the 5th SF GRP (1966-67) and again with F Battery, 79th AFA, 1st Cav Div 1971-72, under the Blue Max 6 callsign.

Charleston lost one of her truly fine gentlemen on Thursday, August 8, 2013, when Lawrence Edward McKay, Jr. went to be with his Heavenly Father. Larry was born in Charleston, South Carolina on August 26, 1936, he grew up playing on the Moultrie playground, was one of Mr. Matty Matthews Golden Glove Champions and graduated from Bishop England High School. At the Citadel, he was elected President of the Class of 1958 and received the prestigious Willson Ring.

After graduating from The Citadel, McKay dedicated his efforts to proudly serving his county, country, community, and family as a citizen-soldier, the hallmark of every Citadel graduate. He earned a Masters Degree from Duke University en route to a teaching assignment in the Department of Social Sciences, USMA, West Point. He spent twenty years on active duty including tours in Vietnam as Aviation Officer 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and later as Commanding Officer, F. Battery, 79th Aerial Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. His "Blue Max" Cobra attack helicopter unit was selected as the Army Aviation Association of America unit of the year for tank kills at the Battle of An Loc, Easter, 1972. At the

Battle of An Loc, Larry McKay and his co-pilot, Barry McIntyre, became the first helicopter pilots in history to destroy an enemy tank. McKay's military decorations include the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Bronze Star.

McKay returned home to Charleston in 1978 to become the Headmaster at East Cooper School. He served as a Vice President and Officer at the Seabrook Island Company and at Wild Dunes Associates. He was the founding President of the Wild Dunes Telecommunications Company, the first shared-tenant telephone company in South Carolina. He currently served on the Boards of three businesses, and is a founding partner in Horizon Capital Group, LLC.

General James Alexander Grimsley, Jr. selected McKay to be the Director of Student Activities at The Citadel where he taught as an Adjunct Professor in the Business Department. Back at The Citadel, his multiple duties included: producing The Citadel Sesquicentennial Tattoo, volunteer fundraiser for The Citadel Band, Pipes and Drums trip to participate in the Edinburgh Tattoo, faculty advisor for cadet trip to former Soviet Union Naval Academy at Sevastopol, Crimea during the transition of naval forces to Russia and Ukraine, and faculty advisor for a 2005 Business School cadet trip to Wall Street and corporate America.

McKay's community support includes service on the Trident United Way Board, Junior Achievement Board, Youth Services Charleston Board, Christ Our King Parish Council, Chairman of Golf Committees for the Kidney Foundation, Rice Planters, and The USGA Senior Amateur at Wild Dunes. He was the President of the East Cooper Meals on Wheels Board.

Colonel McKay is survived by his mother, Beatrice S. McKay; and his wife of 54 years, Fay Chapman McKay. He is also survived by their four children and nine grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to The Charleston Catholic School, [www.charlestoncatholic.com](http://www.charlestoncatholic.com).

**MOONEY, Phillip Anthony** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 67-7QC, flew in Vietnam with the 1st Cav Div (1967-68) and the 1st TC Bn (1972)

LT Colonel Philip Anthony Mooney Jr., US Army, of Huntington Beach, CA, passed away on June 11, 2013 at the age of 69. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Lupe, six children, and his Sheltie named Cassie.

Philip was born in Chicago, IL and enlisted in the US Army at the age of 18. While serving in the Army, Philip received his Bachelors degree from the University of Albuquerque and his Masters degree from the Florida Institute of Technology. Philip served 22 years in the Army as both a fixed wing and a helicopter pilot achieving the level of Master Army Aviator. He served in Germany and two tours in Vietnam, retiring in 1984 as a Lieutenant

Colonel. After retiring from the Army, Philip worked for 18 years on the Apache Helicopter Program at Boeing (formerly Hughes and McDonnell Douglas) in Mesa, Arizona, retiring in 2003. He will be laid to rest at Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, CA. The family requests you make a contribution to Alzheimer's research. In his name

**MULLEN, Max H.** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 55-V, flew in Vietnam with the 20th SOS (1967-68) under the Pony Express callsign.

Max H. Mullen peacefully died on January 15, 2011, he was born in Burr Oak, KS, he attended Lebanon High School (KS), and Kansas State University. There he joined the ROTC and threshed wheat during summers from Oklahoma to Canada before he joined the service.

Strong-willed, energetic and independent, he loved his 31 years in the military. Highlights include flying through the sound barrier (1955); armaments advisor to South Korean Air Force at Suwon, South Korea (1959); base operations at Spangdahlem (Germany) Air Force Base (1963-1967); flying special operations in the CH-3 helicopter at Nha Trang Air Base, South Vietnam, and then at the Royal Thai Air Base, Udorn, Thailand (1967-1968) where his crew received two Air Medals for missions on the same day and where one CH-3 he flew, named the "Black Maria," is now on display at the USAF Museum at Wright Patterson AFB; and flying the UH-1 helicopter in the Army Reserves (including several special assignments in South America).

He also loved the extended Mullen family (and their reunions); Lebanon HS reunions; golf junkets; painting, travel; visiting his sisters and friends in Red Cloud, NE and Smith Center, KS; and the choir and worship community of White Bluff Chapel outside of Whitney, TX.

Survivors include one son and his family, two daughters and their families, five grandchildren, one great-grandson, one sister and many nieces and nephews. Interment was held at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery. Memorials may be made to the American Heart Association, P.O. Box 841125, Dallas, TX 75284-1125.

*Editor's Note: The dedication ceremony of the Max Mullen's CH-3 into the Air Force Museum runs on page 42 of this issue*



**PADDOCK, Wallace Ronald (Ron)** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-5 & 66-5W, flew in Vietnam with B Troop, 1/9th Cav (1966-67); B/25th Avn, 25th INF (1967); and the 147th ASHC (1969-70) under the Red 25 callsign.

*The following TAPS Entry was sent to us by Member Jack Swizer*

It is with the greatest regret that I inform you of the passing of Wallace Ronald (Ron) Paddock on July 2, 2013. Ron was a CW4, a life member of VHPA, and a very close friend. Ron graduated

# TAPS

from Class 66-5 and spent many years in the Army. He was well respected among his peers and I spent many years with him not only in the military, but also at Air Logistics in Lake Charles, La flying to offshore oil platforms, but also with the 300th Aviation Company, Army reserve in Grand Prairie, TX.

Ron was an excellent aviator and was awarded many decorations for his performance, including the DFC in addition to various other awards. He was good friend, a fellow aviator, and a mentor to me and many of my friends.

His wife Marge preceded him in death 3 years ago. His family advises me that he passed away from Parkinson's disease as well as Parkinson's related dementia. His wishes were that he was to be cremated and his ashes be interred next to his wife at this Fort Worth National Cemetery. He was born on February 7, 1939, in Sharon, PA. He was a great friend to me and my family. I hope that this notice will serve to advise our members of another passing of one of our own.

*John (Jack) Swizer  
CW3, Ret., VHPA Life Member*

## **PEACON, George Leon III Graduated flight training with Flight Class 64-2W, flew in Vietnam with the 117th AHC in 1963-64.**

George Leon Peacon, 72, passed away Saturday July 6, 2013. Born in Miami, Florida he was a retired Commercial Pilot with Eastern Airlines. He was also a United States Army veteran having served in Vietnam with the 117th Avn. Co. He was also an avid big game hunter having made five African Safari hunting trips.

He will be missed by his loving family and his many friends. Survivors include his beloved wife Mary Peacon of the home, one daughter, one son and two granddaughters.

The family requests that memorials in George's memory be made to Truth in Nature, Georgia Chapter [www.truthinnature.org/donate-sponsor/help/](http://www.truthinnature.org/donate-sponsor/help/) as well as the Gary Sinise Foundation [www.garysinisefoundation.org/help\\_us/donate](http://www.garysinisefoundation.org/help_us/donate). Online condolences may be made to the Peacon family by visiting [www.chandlerjacksonfh.com](http://www.chandlerjacksonfh.com) –

The above TAPS entry was sent to us by Member Barry McHenry who added "George was a classmate of mine in 64-2W and we served together in the 117th Avn. Co. in Qui Nhon Vietnam (1964-65)."

**RILEY, Paul R. Jr. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 60-2FW and 62-4Q, flew in Vietnam with C/2/30 ARA, 1st Cav, 1965-66; 120th Avn 1966; 361st AWC 1968; and the 335th AHC 1968-69 under the Falcon, Dean, Panther& Cowboy callsigns.**

Col. Paul R. Riley, Jr., 78, of Lawton, OK died Sunday, July 28, 2013. He was born July 27, 1935



in Troy, NY and attended school in Troy and graduated from Catholic Central High School in 1952. He attended Siena College in Loudonville, NY and graduated in June 1958 with a degree in economics. While at Siena, he was a member of ROTC and was the cadet brigade colonel and head of the Corps of Cadets in his final semester.

He received his commission as a second lieutenant in the US Army in Field Artillery in June 1958. He attended flight school at Fort Rucker, Ala. and became an Army aviator first in fixed wing aircraft and later as a helicopter pilot flying Huey and Cobra gunships. He served two tours in Vietnam. During his first tour in 1965, he was a member of the First Cavalry Division's Aerial Rocket Artillery and fought in the battle of the Ia Drang over Landing Zone X-ray. His awards included the Distinguished Flying Cross, Master Aviation Badge, Bronze star medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal, Air Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Gold Star, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Republic of Vietnam Service Medal with seven Stars and Meritorious Service Medal, and Presidential Unit Citation.

Paul married Beverly M. Deso on September 1, 1956 in Troy and they had two children, Beverly and the children traveled all over the country with Paul until his retirement at Fort Sill in July 1978 after twenty years of service. Paul received his MBA from the University of Oklahoma in 1974. He also was a CPA. Following his military retirement, he went to work for Halliburton in Duncan, Okla. in 1978 as an accountant. At the time of his retirement from Halliburton in 1993, he was an accounting manager in the reports section.

Paul was preceded in death by his wife, Beverly in 2012, he is survived by his daughter, one son, one brother and one nephew. Burial with full military honors was held at the Fort Sill National Cemetery, memorial contributions may be made to the charity of the donor's choice. An online guest book and sympathy cards are available at [www.beckerfuneral.com](http://www.beckerfuneral.com)

## **RIESTER, David Conrad Marine Corps Aviator, flew in Vietnam with HMM-354 (1969)**

David Konrad Riesterer, 67, of Fleming Island, Florida, passed away June 13, 2013. David was born in Washington, D.C. and graduated from Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania in 1967. David was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps and earned his Wings of Gold at the Naval Aviation Training Center Pensacola, Florida. In 1969 he was assigned to fly Combat Helicopter Missions with HMM-364, the Purple Foxes, at Marble Mountain Air Facility, Vietnam. Upon his return from Vietnam, he was promoted to the rank of Captain and became a Flight Instructor and Standardization Pilot at NAS Whiting Field flying T-28 aircraft. David was honorably discharged from the USMC in 1973, and started a new career with the Federal

Aviation Administration as an Air Traffic Controller in Hilliard, Florida. During his 27 year career with the FAA, David earned the position of Area Supervisor and retired in 2000.

David was a member of Rotary Sunrise in Orange Park and New Grace Church on Fleming Island. David is survived by his wife of 44 years, Linda, and one daughter, his first grandchild is due in July. Other survivors include his one brother, one sister, and numerous nieces and nephews.

The family asks that contributions in David's memory be made to the Community Hospice of Northeast Florida (4266 Sunbeam Road, Jacksonville, Florida 32257) and Rotary Club of Orange Park Sunrise Charities (Tel. 904-635-5701). Post tributes at [www.hardage-giddensrivermead.com](http://www.hardage-giddensrivermead.com)

## **SCOTT, Lester T. Jr. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 69-26, flew in Vietnam with D Troop, \_ Cav, 1st Cav Div in 1969-70 and with the 235th Avn in 1970 under the Mustang 36 and the Delta 3 callsigns,**

Lt. Colonel Lester Talley Scott Jr., U.S. Army (retired) died June 5, 2013, at Mayo Hospital in Scottsdale, AZ, after a courageous battle from the side-effects of a stem cell transplant.

Les was born in Johnson City, Tennessee, survivors include three sons, one grandchild, one sister and numerous nieces, great nieces and great nephews.

Les was a 1962 graduate of Science Hill High School and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He served two tours of duty in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot with the First Infantry Division. His military decorations include the Distinguished Flying Cross (three awards), the Meritorious Service Medal (three awards) the Bronze Star (three awards), Air Medal (61 awards) and the Army Master Aviator Badge. He was retired from the New Jersey Army National Guard.

Les held memberships in the Distinguished Flying Cross Society, Society of the First Infantry Division and the Society of Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Association. He was a former Compatriot in the Kings Mountain Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution.

Burial was held on August 26, 2013, at 1:00 p.m. at Arlington National Cemetery. Memorial contributions are requested to the Wounded Warrior Project, [www.WoundedWarriorProject.org](http://www.WoundedWarriorProject.org).

## **SHTOGREN, Tomas A. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 69-16, flew in Vietnam with the 334th AHC (1969-70); HHC 145th CAB (1970) and the 1st of the 18th Inf, under the Dragon 36 callsign.**

The following TAPS entry was received by Bill Sorenson, the President of the Arizona Chapter of the VHPA. It was written by the widow of Tom Shtogren and in it, she requests that the VHPA be notified of Tom's passing.

# TAPS

Dear Bill,

My dear husband, Tom Shtogren, is no longer with us. He passed away on March 8, 2012, from lung cancer.

He truly loved flying helicopters. He attended Primary Rotary Wing Training at Fort Wolters, Mineral Wells, TX, as a member of Class 69-16, the Brown Hats, from September 1968 to February 1969. His father, Major General Anthony T. Shtogren, Air Force, addressed the graduates at completion of the course. Then, it was onto Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Georgia, to complete the second part of the flight training. Tom served his second tour in Vietnam from October 3, 1969 to September 25, 1970. He flew Cobra Gunships with the 334th Aviation Battalion at Bien Hoa Air Base. After that tour, he completed Fixed Wing Pilot Training in Savannah, Georgia.

Being a helicopter pilot was what he really wanted to do even before his first tour to Nam, from June 17, 1966 to June 16, 1967. He had passed the test and physical to attend flight school; however, he was an Infantry Company Commander with the First Infantry Division the first half of his tour and an Aide de Camp to Major General William DePuy, the Commander of the Big Red One, during the second half.

I know how much it meant to him to be a member the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association, which he joined many years ago. Above our computer, Tom hung a framed map of Vietnam with a wooden carved replica of his Master Aviator Wings.

Very sincerely,  
Agnes Shtogren

## TAYLOR, Edwin Bryan, graduated flight training with Flight Class 67-11.

Edwin Bryan Taylor was promoted into heaven through death on July 27, 2013, in Hendersonville, at the age of 72 after a courageous battle against the dreadful disease of ALS.

He was born Feb. 23, 1941, in Tyler, Texas. He served 33 years in the U.S. Army, being one of the first to achieve the rank of chief warrant officer 5. He served in both the Vietnam conflict and Desert Storm, earning a Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Star in battle.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Darlene Bello Taylor, two sons, one daughter and four grand children.

## SZABO, John Martin Graduated flight training with Flight Class 65-4W.

Today John Mariner Szabo croaked.

Truth be told, he actually passed on Sunday June 2, 2013, but if you knew him you see him now in this - his



requested obituary opening line.

John Szabo passed at Temple University Hospital from injuries sustained in an accident that occurred June 1, while piloting his twin engine Wilson Cri Cri (Cricket) airplane out of Doylestown Airport. A tragic end to a life lived to the fullest; some comfort may be found in that he died doing what he loved. Although 69 in years, the twinkle in his eye, the sharpness of his mind, and his enthusiasm for life were wonderfully and contagiously childlike.

Born in Rahway, N.J., in 1944, he later moved to Florida where he graduated from Lake Worth High School, then he packed up his Corvette and traveled across the country in search of new adventures.

From 1966 to 1968, he served with distinction and valor as a member of the U.S. Army Aviation Branch. Serving two combat tours in Vietnam, he earned the coveted title of Aircraft Commander, piloting a UH1H/Huey helicopter. He was twice wounded in action, earning numerous awards and distinctions, including the Purple Heart. John continued his passion for flight and became a career pilot, employed most recently for more than 20 years with Merck in New Jersey.

He built and flew his own aircraft, restored classic cars and found joy in nature. There was nothing he couldn't fix, and no question from his children or grandchildren that he couldn't answer. He was a jack of all trades and master of every one of them. John is survived his daughter and his son, two grandchildren and two grandchildren. His longtime girlfriend, Heather Kinak, who died June 7, 2012, and her children held a special place in his heart.

To share memories, please visit:

<http://memorialwebsites.legacy.com/JohnSzabo/homepage.aspx>  
Memorial contributions may be made to EAA Young Eagles, P.O. Box 3086, Oshkosh, WI 54903 or to the Space Foundation, Attention: Development, Space Foundation, 4425 Arrowswest Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80907 or via the Web site [www.spacefoundation.org/donate](http://www.spacefoundation.org/donate).

Thank you to all who touched his life. He misses us, is glad he was so loved, is delighted to once again have a full head of hair, and is happy he does not need to pay taxes. Followed dreams, tinkered, adventured, learned, laughed, loved...

## Special supplement to our TAPS Section....

## ADIE, John Robert Graduated flight training with Flight Class 61-60

Colonel John Robert Adie (USA Ret.), 95, died August 2, 2013 in Williamsburg, VA. Col. Adie was born in Lowell, MA; he was the oldest of four sons. He graduated from Keith Academy in Lowell, MA and received his B.S. in Production Management and Engineering from Boston University and a M.S. in Transportation from the University of Tennessee.

Col. Adie had a long career in the U.S. Army, serving over 32 years. He began his career in 1942 in the

Enlisted Service and then was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Engineer Corps. Throughout World War II, he held various positions in the Engineer Corps, including Company Commander at the Engineer Training Center, Fort Belvoir, VA and in combat service as Engineer Battalion, Commander in Manila, Philippines Islands.

After World War II, he joined the US Army Reserves while he completed his undergraduate degree. He then returned to active duty, spending the majority of his career in the Transportation Corps. Major assignments included combat service during the Korean War at Pusan; Commander, 71st Transportation Battalion at Fort Riley, KS and South Korea; Director, Aircraft Maintenance Training Department at the Army Transportation School, Fort Eustis, VA; Commander, 107th Transportation Brigade, Germany; and Director of the Army Aviation Research & Development Laboratory, Fort Eustis. While in the Transportation Corps, John attended the Transportation Officer's Advanced Course (1953) and US Army Command & General Staff College (1959). At age 41, he attended all the Army's flight training schools – fulfilling his long-time goal to fly.

During his tenure in the US Army, he received many awards and honors, including the Legion of Merit (1 Oak Leaf Cluster); Bronze Star Medal (1 Oak Leaf Cluster); Army Commendation Medal; and the Senior Army Aviator Badge. He was a member of the American Helicopter Society; Army Aviation Association of America; and National Defense Transportation Association. After retiring from the Army, John worked for twelve years as a Manufacturer's Representative for the Boeing Company in Hampton, VA.

One of John's proudest accomplishments was serving as one of three founders of the Transportation Corps Aviation Association in 1995. He was the group's first president and remained as TCAA's President Emeritus. In 2009, he became the first inductee into TCAA's Hall of Fame. He also served for many years on the Board of Directors of the Army Transportation Museum Foundation.

John is survived by his wife of 59 years, Julia (Farnham) Adie; one daughter, one son and three grandchildren. Interment was held at Arlington National Cemetery, his family would be honored if memorial contributions would be made to the Army Transportation Museum Foundation, Fort Eustis, VA.

*Editor's note – It appears that Colonel Adie never flew helicopters in SEA during the Vietnam war but I know many of our members would like to know of his passing. Through his work both while in the Army and later at the Boeing Aircraft Company, Col. Adie made immeasurable contributions to US Army Aviation.*

# TAPS

Notice of the passing of the following 14 Military Aviators were received by the VHPA during the production period for this issue. None of these men were ever members of the association, nor were the notices of their death reported to the Association by a member of the man's family, or by a member of the VHPA; they were all obtained through an internet search. Because of that, we have posted the TAPS information we received on these men on their individual listings of the on-line membership directory being maintained at VHPA.org. If you are not able to retrieve the information on-line, call HQ for assistance (1-800-505-VHPA).

**ALBERS, Robert M.** USAF Aviator, no record available of Flight School or SEA units in VHPA Database.

**AVERETT, Kent G.** US Army Aviator, no record available of Flight School or SEA units in VHPA Database.

**BECKWITH, Reynolds**, Naval Aviator, no flight school or SEA unit information listed in VHPA database

**EITEL, Robert James** USMC Aviator, no record available of Flight School or SEA units in VHPA Database

**ERICKSON, Loren Thomas**, USMC Aviator, no record of Flight School or SEA units in VHPA Database

**GUTHRIE, Jerry L.** US Army Aviator, graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-8, no information on units he served with in Vietnam is available on the VHPA database

**HARRIS, Larry** Graduated flight training with Flight Class 69-23, flew in Vietnam with the 23rd InfDiv in 1969-70

**HOLMES, William T.** USMC Aviator, no record available of Flight School or SEA units in VHPA Database.

**LAIDLAW, William F. (Bill)** US Army Aviator, graduated flight training with Flight Class 61, flew in Vietnam with A Troop, 1/9th Cav (1965-66).

**LANGE, Gerald J.** USAF Aviator, no record available of Flight School training, flew in SEA with the 37th ARRS (1970-71)

**ROSENTHAL, George**, USMC Aviator, no flight school or SEA unit information listed in VHPA database

**ROBERTS, Phillip Eugene**, USAF Aviator, flew SAR Helo's in Vietnam, no formal record available of Flight School or SEA units in VHPA Database.

**THIELS, Jerry Michael** US Army Aviator, Graduated flight training with Flight Class 63-7T

**WHITMIRE, V.C. "Whit"**, USMC Aviator, flew in SEA with HA(L)-3 in 1969.

## Looking For...help in restoring US Army B Model Huey s/n 64-13948

I am personally restoring a Bell UH-1B, s/n 64-13948, for a future museum display and am researching its service history. I've learned from the VHPA helicopter database that it served with several Army units in Vietnam between 1966 and 1971, and I wanted to ask if your association might be able to help me locate former flight crew members who could share experiences of flying her in Vietnam and/or might have photos of her taken back in her "in-country" days.

948's known units and dates (data taken from the VHPA Vietnam Helicopter History and the US Army Gold Book): 2nd Signals Grp, VN, 10-12/1966; 6th Army, Dugway Proving Groud, UT, 1-5/1967; USARV Flt Det, VN, 6-7/1967; 355th Avn Co, Ft. Sill, 11/1967 - 3/1968; 335 Trans Co, VN, 6/1968; HHD, 44th Eng Grp, Thailand, 12/1968; 120th Avn Co, VN, 1/1969 - 9/1971; WAYBAA Avn Trng Team, VN, 10-12/1971. She was then transferred to the training command at Ft Rucker, thence to an unknown ARNG unit and decommissioned in 1975.

I'll also be glad to fill anyone interested in 948 on her postwar history (for instance she was once used in the filming of the movie Terminator II), along with my plans for her restoration and display. Thanks for your help!

Best regards,

Ken Eward

Chetek, Wisconsin.  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

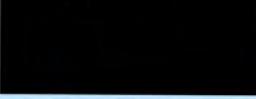


# CURRENT VHPA CHAPTERS

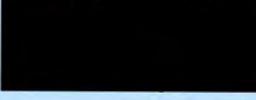
ALASKA CHAPTER  
Victor Micol, President



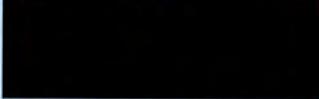
ARIZONA CHAPTER  
Bill Sorenson, President



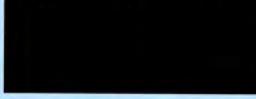
CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH  
Ken Fritz, President



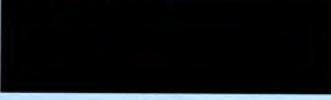
CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER  
Tom Mc Millen, President



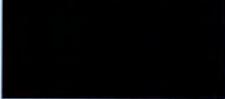
FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER  
Mike Sheuerman, President



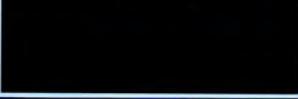
GEORGIA CHAPTER  
Bill Mc Rae, President



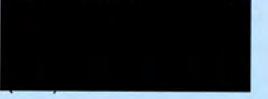
LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER  
Victor Lent, President



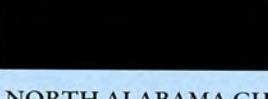
MICHIGAN CHAPTER  
Charley Martin, President



UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER  
Ray Wilson, President



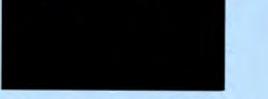
MONTANA CHAPTER  
Todd Brandoff, President



NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER  
Les Haas, President



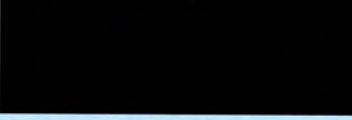
NEW JERSEY CHAPTER  
Pete Purnell, President



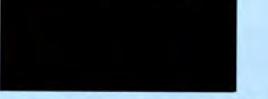
NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER  
Brock Nicholson, President



OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER  
Bob Hamilton, President



OLD DOMINION CHAPTER  
President: Don Agren



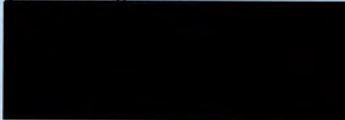
SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER  
Jim Miles



SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER  
Russ Emory, President



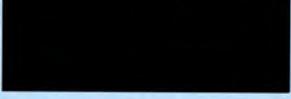
ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER  
John P. Hargleroad



THE ALAMO CHAPTER  
*San Antonio, Texas*  
Jim Martinson, President



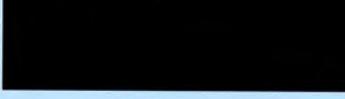
SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER  
*(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter*  
Larry Russell, President



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER  
Sven Akesson, President



VHPA OF FLORIDA  
Tom Rountree, President



WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER  
Don LeMaster, President



## IN DIRE NEED OF ASSISTANCE

We have closed three of our Chapters – Hawaii, Fort Rucker and New England.

All three closed from lack of interest, participation and/or leadership. I really would like to see some of you out there step forward and restart these Chapters and/or even start a new Chapter close to your home.

I know we're all getting older but we're not dead yet! How about it men – a little help would really be appreciated.

Jack Salm - National Chapter Laison - E-Mail:

*The VHPA and Chapters share information and guidance with one another for the mutual benefit of each other. All of our Chapters are separate and independently managed organizations not under control of the VHPA. The VHPA is not authorized to act as an agent or a representative for any of the Chapters nor are any of the Chapters authorized to act as agent or representative for any of the other Chapters or the VHPA as a whole.*

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



## ALASKA CHAPTER OF THE VHPA

The VHPA-ALASKA now has members that cover a large part of our state! We continue to grow and now cover over 350 miles by adding new members from Fairbanks and other areas of the state! How we are going to get everyone together occasionally is a work in progress, but the National VHPA Reunion in Louisville next year might be a good start.

Things have quieted down some as Alaska summers are short and everyone is out enjoying the daylight and 100 years of aviation in Alaska with fly-ins and displays around the state. We did find time to hold our first picnic and BBQ and it was a super success. Good weather, great members and long daylight hours lead to a fat food fest with storytelling and goodtime for all.

David Buirge represented us at the VHPA reunion this year and came back with a lot of stories and excitement over the fun he had. Needless to say, he will be presenting his experience to all of us at our next meeting, September 20, a steak night at the VFW. His excitement is catching and VHPA Alaska Chapter is gaining momentum and we could have a nice showing next year! Also we will be holding our first elections this fall and the steak night will also be a time for nominations.

Last note, our President, Vic Micol, has been laid up with a bit of surgery and so if you have tried to contact and found no response, it is only temporary and he will be up and about soon.

Until later ..... There is pride in knowing that WE FLEW!

[www.vhpaa.org](http://www.vhpaa.org)  
Vic Micol, President  
submitted by Lynn Kile

## CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH (CCN)

The reunion in San Francisco was a really good one for our chapter. Special thanks go to long time CCN member Joe Bilitzke, he couldn't make the reunion, but he loaned his very impressive US flag for display behind the stage at the banquet. The show wouldn't have been the same without it.

We gained 19 new members during the reunion and the MOC was enjoyed by a huge number of pilots and their guests. We want to thank everyone who donated to the cause at the MOC, we now have the funds to pay for the two new tires we needed to get to San Francisco and to pay for the next 6 tires, rear door repairs and some welding we need on the MOC. You guys are incredible.

The NYPD pipe band liked the MOC, too. They put on a special appearance at the MOC that really was a traffic stopper! Crowds of people and cars stopped traffic on Ellis Street for awhile as the pipers entertained us all. The chapter had a good business meeting while in SF and we will be enjoying renewed enthusiasm going forward with new officers.

Thanks to almost everyone's support, there's serious talk of the MOC going to Louisville KY for the 2014 reunion. In the meantime, we have a busy schedule: Cleaning up and repairing the MOC, Labor Day Parade, Veterans Day Parade, USMC Birthday celebrations at the Bryte VFW, putting the 540 rotor head and blades in good condition to mount them on the C Model, another "Vettes" for Vets car show at Redhawk Casino, the Christmas party, the Mud Run on Armed Forces Day 2014, and more. We're also looking for a BBQ in the Delta in September or October if we don't go to the Air Races in Reno. We want to welcome Dave Johnson, who just joined our chapter; he is renovating/rejuvenating our website [www.vhpaccn.org](http://www.vhpaccn.org) We'll have our calendar and more photos on there soon, so check it out.

Ken Fritz, President

## FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

No meeting since the last AVIATOR so nothing much new to report. We will meet September 7 at Logan's Road House, 948 N Loop 820, Hurst, Texas. The Chapter EC will hold a short meeting at 11:30AM with the regular meeting to begin at 12:00 Noon. Adam Steczko will relieve me as President (the cheer will be heard in Mineral Wells, 40 miles away.) Lunch will take place during the Change of President Ceremony. If you live in the surrounding area, say in 25-100 mile radius, please consider joining us. We will discuss some service opportu-

nities for the Chapter as a whole and its individual members. Look forward to a standing room only crowd.

Mike Sheuerman, President (37 days and a wake up)

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter continues to hold a Saturday morning breakfast meeting every other month. We furnish speakers to high schools and colleges, Boy Scout Troops, other youth organizations, and civic groups who want to learn more about the Vietnam War, from those who participated in it. Newnan High School teaches a course on the Vietnam War, and the Georgia Chapter provides our assistance to them whenever possible, like their Student-Vet Connect activities planned for 3-5 October.

Our July meeting featured the viewing of a National Geographic video about three young Huey pilots (Tom Baca, Larry Liss, and Jack Swickard - all Members of VHPA), who stepped up to rescue over 100 RVN troops that were surrounded in a dense bamboo thicket by a superior force of NVA. Extraction was their only option for survival. Initially only one aircraft was available to come to their aid. A second aircraft joined the mission, and after several return trips into the thicket, all survivors were snatched from certain death. The pilots and crews risked their lives and their aircraft to chop their way into the bamboo, but that was their only option. There was no time to wait for others to clear an LZ. The pilots took some serious risk, but that's what helicopter pilots did every day in Vietnam.

In addition to our meetings and educational efforts, the Georgia Chapter continues to assist other groups of Vietnam Veterans in the Atlanta area with their projects by providing Chapter personnel and other resources.

The bi-monthly breakfast meetings continue to be our principal activity. The membership who participate really enjoy the opportunity to get together with other combat helicopter pilots, swap war stories, discuss VA-related information, and maintain those bonds that were forged so long ago.

To those former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots in the Atlanta area, who would like to check us out and/or join our group, please see our web site at [www.gavhp.org](http://www.gavhp.org) for the next meeting date or contact me at [REDACTED] or via telephone at [REDACTED]

Bill McRae, President

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (NCVHPA) has enjoyed another successful month sharing our history with folks across the region.

In early July, the UH-1C and the OH-58 journeyed to Pikeville, KY, to join the Vietnam Traveling Wall out of Cocoa, FL, for a week long display. During this time, the Mayor of Williamstown, KY, came down to check out the Wall for placement in his town and enticed us to continue on to 25 miles south of Cincinnati, OH, joining the Wall for a second week at the Vietnam Veterans of Kentucky North Cemetery.

In North Carolina, Brock Nicholson and Bob Inglis took the "H" model Huey to a "Scoops for the Troops" ice cream fund raiser, sponsored by the USO in Cary, North Carolina. On August 3rd we had the "H" model at a large USO fund raising golf tournament in Raleigh. Later in August there will be another static display in Harrodsburg, KY.

Want to stay in touch and follow our Chapter activities and plans on-line? We're on the web at: [NCVHPA.org](http://NCVHPA.org), you can also link to our Face Book page from there.

Brock Nicholson, President

Submitted by: B. Seago

## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The last Aviator issue 31-04 July / August 2013 article indicated that the Chapter would unveil our new Chapter logo. I think that is a misprint for our Chapter as we have not changed our logo. Hopefully it was meant for the Washington State Chapter as they recently changed their logo, or maybe that was a hint.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

The South Missouri Chapter of VHPA had second quarter meeting in St. Louis, Holiday Inn Airport West, 8 June 2013. The group picture at the meeting was in the last Aviator issue. The Chapter had several first time attendees and new members, our membership is now exceeding 95. After the meeting the meal was served. Following the meal, Bill Thompson began a pictorial presentation and discussion on the "Freedom Bird" the term applied to the aircraft used to carry troops to and from Vietnam. Everyone loved the program, very well done, our thanks to Bill.

The third quarter meeting will be 24 August 2013 AT HyVee Club Room 405 East Nifong in Columbia, Missouri announcement will be on the website [www.vhpasmo.org](http://www.vhpasmo.org). The August meeting is election of officers for the Chapter. We encourage your attendance to show support for the Chapter. At the close of the meeting there will be a brief Change of Command, and Bill Thompson will be President.

Once again VHPA Reunion in San Francisco was a success. Thanks to all VHPA Executive Council.

My personal thanks to John Sorensen for his friendship and leadership not only to the National VHPA, also to the South Missouri Chapter.

I will close by saying it has been my sincere pleasure to have served as your President for the last two years. The Chapter continues to grow. I appreciated all the assistance from the South Missouri Chapter Veterans, my thanks and Welcome Home.

**Russ Emory, President (Soon to be Past President)**

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

The Southern California Chapter will have the yearly business meeting and election of officers on Saturday, October 12th, time and location pending.

On Sunday, October 27th we plan on setting up our So Cal info booth at the 12th Annual Wings Wheels and Rotors Expo at the Los Alamitos Army Airfield. Over 30,000 attended last year and \$20,000 was given to MWR to support the armed forces personnel on the Joint Forces Training Base at Los Alamitos. On display will be military aircraft, helicopters, and war birds along with public safety, first responders and military equipment. A car show and aircraft flyovers are planned. The Expo and parking are Free.

On Saturday November 16th The Western Museum of Flight at Torrance

## OLD DOMINION (VIRGINIA) CHAPTER

At our September meeting we are presenting the Legend Brewing Company a Plaque of Appreciation and a VHPA Wall Clock for allowing us to use their facility for our meetings ever since our Chapter's inception. A big thank you also goes out to Rich Severin for getting the plaque.

Our October 5th meeting will be a Social Event cruise, with wives and friends on the Rappahannock River aboard the Captain Thomas out of Tappahannock, VA to the Ingleside Winery. We will meet for the cruise at 10AM at Hoskins Creek, cost of Cruise is \$25.00 per person, this includes winetasting at Ingleside. Lunch at Ingleside will be \$13.00. Please let us know if you will be attending this fun outing, cruise details are available at:

<http://www.tangiercruise.com/rappahannock-island-cruises.asp>

Airport will have a lecture, The Vietnam Airwar. The So Cal Chapter will be there along with several Vietnam era aircraft will be on display, Sven Akesson, President

## THE ALAMO CHAPTER

A number of our members enjoyed the reunion in San Francisco, and much about that event is found elsewhere in this issue. One of our members, Mike Maloy, stayed behind to drive his beloved restored Army deuce-and-a-half truck, The Chief, in an Independence Day parade in Windcrest, Texas. The truck was filled with other veterans from the Alamo Chapter, the local chapter of the Special Forces Association, and VFW Post 8541.

Hopefully, you will receive this issue before 13 September. If you have, and you are an Alamo Chapter member, it may not be too late to join us in Fredericksburg, Texas. We have a room block with special rates, which might not be sold out by now, at the Hangar Hotel at the Gillespie County Airport on 13 and 14 September. This very interesting hotel was built from the ground up to resemble a 1941 WWII hangar, inside and out, except they added the luxury. The theme is reflected inside, with airplane memorabilia, model planes, USO history, and the romance of the '40s. Best of all is the Officers Club Bar inside. You must see (and hear) performance of the blind piano player and his dog, who are O. Club regulars.

Besides planning to carouse in the hotel Club, we also have a block of tickets for a fun live play, downtown in the Rock Box Theater. If you are an Alamo Chapter member, you have been receiving e-mails with details of this event. So you should know that you must contact an Alamo Chapter officer to reserve rooms or play tickets from the limited numbers in our blocks. If you have not done so, please do it right away, and we will try to accommodate. See our website: [www.vhpalaamo.org](http://www.vhpalaamo.org) for more details.

On 13 December, Al Flory will host a gala Christmas party at the Army Residence Community (ARC) in San Antonio. Al has arranged food, drink, live music, and dancing, all for a very nominal fee. Please contact our treasurer, Ben Treadaway, right away, to reserve your place at this party with your buddies. More details can be found at our website, [www.vhpalaamo.org](http://www.vhpalaamo.org).

**Jim Martinson, President**



We are planning a Christmas Gathering at the Bellwood Officers Club at the Defense General Supply Center for Early December. Please check with us for details.

**Don Agren, President  
135thAHC Emu 10 '70-71**

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER AND THE HELICOPTER WAR MUSEUM (HWM): Not to be redundant, but not all members read every edition of the Aviator and we are so proud of our Museum we want everyone to know its history. We'll keep it short but here we go again. The Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association established the HWM by retrofitting a forty-eight foot freight trailer into a mobile museum to tell the story of the role of helicopters and aircrews involved in the Vietnam War. The chapter built the museum in a trailer because the Chapter members believed that by being mobile, it can be easily exhibited in different locations.



Since the very successful first showing at the 2005 Veteran's Day Celebration in Greeley Colorado, the Museum has been to venues such as schools, air shows, veteran's memorials and patriotic holidays. We estimate that over 15,000 people have visited the Helicopter War Museum, shared the experiences of the helicopter aircrews, and learned of the Vietnam War from veteran pilot Chapter members who serve as docents. We announced that we would be participating in the "Rolln' with the Troops" 2nd Annual Event, at the Lakewood, Colorado, Heritage Center, sponsored by the "Healing Warriors Program". It was well attended and we are scheduled for next year. Pictures with the Pinup girls was a hi-light for the participating Docents, as well as giving the parents photo opportunities with their children sitting in our Huey Mock-up, ready for flight as we once were. This past July 4th, 2013, while several members were in San Francisco including yours truly, The Museum was displayed at the July 4th celebration in Golden, Colorado. Bill Robie acted as OIC for this event and Chapters members, Jim McNamee, Steve Schwim,

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

The North Alabama Chapter has been very busy the past few months. The restoration of Buc 3 continues. We have progressed to the point where we have displayed the aircraft in several events.



We have participated in the local Vietnam Veterans Association welcome home program. This event was started last year by the VVA. The aircraft was on display at the Huntsville Veterans Memorial. Visitors were allowed to get in the aircraft and move switches and controls and ask questions. This was a big hit especially for the kids.

We also went to two local Elementary Schools. These were great events as the Children were allowed to enter the aircraft as before to move switches etc. You could see the excitement in their faces as their imagination ran wild. We believe this program will educate the children as well as the adults on the Vietnam era. It is wonderful feeling receiving the welcome home messages even though they are about fifty years late. We even visited a Church that was conducting a Bible School. There were very young as well as teenagers who toured Buc 3. From the excitement of our chapter members, who were the Docents on these events, shows that these activities help us as well as the public. This is the main mission of the restoration of Buc 3.

Our Chapter also has other programs that are related to fund raising as well as just plain entertainment of our members and their families.

We hold our monthly meetings at a German Restaurant, "The Schnitzel Ranch". We have a great partnership with them. We put the aircraft on dis-

play at a local activity and they set up a German Food Stand that we help man and we share in the profits.

The Entertainment and fun part is a Quarterly event that the members and their family participate. This quarter we visited the Jack Daniels Distillery in Lynchburg, Tennessee. We left in a convoy had a wonderful time touring the distillery and after we had lunch at the famous" Miss Mary Bobo's Restaurant."



The last event, but not the least, is attending the VHPA Reunion in San Francisco. This was a special reunion for us as we had a special project to complete. The aircraft we restored was flown in Vietnam by the 170th Assault Helicopter Company. The President Les Haas came up with the idea of presenting them with a surprise memento of the Helicopter. A pictorial history book was put together by Sam Maki our Secretary. This included pictures and comments from the time we accepted the aircraft for restoration to the present. This included the complete teardown and repair as well as events participated in. The wonderful thing about this is that our President Les Haas presented it to James Johnson who actually flew the aircraft in Vietnam. This was a very moving little ceremony as many were in tears or near tears.

Les Haas/President

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## VHPA OF FLORIDA

During June and July we mostly worked on our equipment, participated in a parade and supported the Korean War Memorial Dedication at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park.

On June 1st we met at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park to tie down the rotor blades on both the Cobra and Huey helicopters on display as part of the Vietnam memorial at the park which is dedicated to our member LTC Jim Basta. We were assisted by a Bright House truck and employee, Louis Valdez, in adding the tie downs. While we were there we set the work we needed on our trailer mounted OH-6 LOACH, and determine dates, times, and location to complete the tasks.

On July 4th we participated in the largest 4th of July parade in Florida. The parade takes place every year in Brandon, FL. It was a great parade with thousands of people lining the street and giving us a very big "Welcome Home" as we passed. Then July 11th – 13th we took the OH-6 to the farm of one of our chapter's "Founding Father's", Lance Ham in Plant City, FL. There we worked on it to replace the pilot side upper windscreens, the windscreens in one of the cockpit doors, we corrected a leakage problem from the transmission, did some painting and we drained the remaining fuel from the aircraft.

Upcoming events include a Board of Directors meeting at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park in Tampa, FL. The main topic of this meeting will be finalizing our planning for our 2013 Reunion which will be held September 26th – 29th at the Sheraton Tampa East Hotel, 10221 Princess Palm Avenue, Tampa, FL. The Reunion Registration Form is posted on our web site ([www.vhpaf.org](http://www.vhpaf.org)). Room reservations can be made directly with the hotel at (813) 623-6363 or through a link on our web page. We will have the OH-6, Memorabilia, and Sales set up at the hotel as well as our hospitality



4th of July Parade, Brandon, FL from left to right: Tom Rountree, Tom Tomlinson, Ernest "Rabbit" Hare, Bob Johnson and Robert "BJ" Atkins



Working on our OH-6 at Lance Ham's farm in Plant City, FL. From left to right: Ernest "Rabbit" Hare, Steven "Smitty" Smith, Dick Fernandez, Bob Johnson, Tom Frankenstein and Tom Tomlinson



New Korean War Memorial that was dedicated at the Hillsboro County Veterans Park in Tampa on 27 July, 2013.

suite. Our Friday night dinner will be a catered BBQ held at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park so that those members and guests will have an opportunity to visit the Vietnam Memorial. The Saturday night banquet will be held at the Sheraton. If you will be visiting Florida during this period you are always welcome.

On July 27th we supported the Dedication Ceremony for the Korean War Memorial at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park, photos of that ceremony are included in this edition of the Aviator. On September 19th – 22nd we take the OH-6 to support the Moving Wall display at the American Legion Post # 4 in Lakeland, FL.

We will then support the Nature Coast All Veterans Reunion north of Crystal River on US Highway 19 from October 13th – 20th where we will have the OH-6, sales, and our coin operated Little LOACH for the kids to "fly". Then in November 11th – 15th we will be in Sarasota, FL at the Senior Friendship Center to support the Moving Wall with our OH-6, sales, and Little LOACH.



Just a few of the VHPAF members that supported the dedication of the Korean War monument, shown here (from left) are Larry Huffman, Tom Rountree, Harry Bryant, Bryan O'Reilly, Tom Tomlinson, Robert "BJ" Atkins, Ernest "Rabbit" Hare, Dick Fernandez and Steven "Smitty" Smith

As always we welcome all VHPA members to any and all of our functions and events. If you have questions or need additional information, all of the officers can be reached through our web page.

**Tom Rountree, President**

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER



Our Chapter President, Ray Wilson, welcomed 27 members and guests at the first chapter dinner meeting on 25 July at St. Paul, Minnesota's Mai Village Vietnamese Restaurant. As is normally the case at our bi-monthly meetings, everyone enjoyed good conversation, stories and food. We were well cared for by the staff at Mai Village and the food was delicious. The restaurant placed our group in a separate area so as to keep the media away and spare our members from autograph seekers and hero worshipers. It was a nice evening gathering with spouses and friends.

The name change to "Upper Midwest Chapter" was chosen in order to expand our chapter of primarily Minnesota residents into a chapter that welcomes membership-eligible residents of our neighboring states as well. As more surrounding-area eligible aviators hear of our chapter and reach out to us, we add them to our roster - we are growing. Several members and spouses attended the national organization reunion in San Francisco in July and all had a great time there and made it back home

safely, which is always nice.

Our next regular meeting will be held at the Ft. Snelling Officers Club at 11:30 on 19 September. Attached is a picture of our group.

For membership, contact President Ray Wilson at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and if you will be attending the next chapter meeting on 19 September, please advise Russ Jowers at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

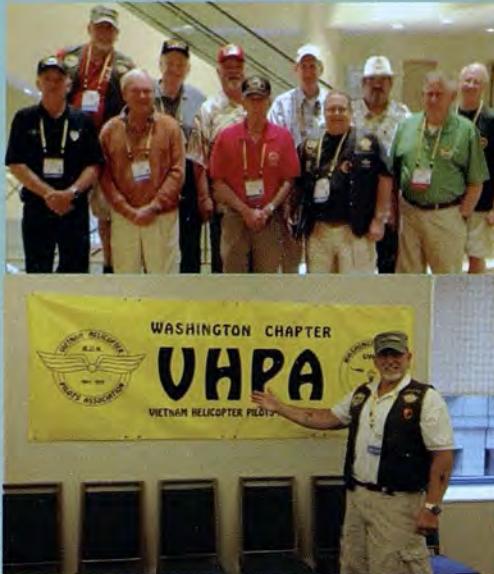
**Ray Wilson, President**

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

Washington State was well represented at the recent VHPA reunion in San Francisco. We counted over 40 Washington members in attendance of which 21 are local chapter members. Our hospitality suite saw a number of visitors stopping in to chat, enjoy a cold one and to ask about our local chapter. Many of those folks purchased our new "challenge coin" and other items we offer for sale. Those attending this year's event agreed that this seemed to be the best reunion ever held and with the number of activities available for the attendees and the picture perfect weather, it will be long remembered as a truly outstanding reunion. Congratulations to all those who worked so hard to put on this splendid event.

For our next chapter meeting we will be headed to Spokane for our annual Eastern Washington get together on the 21st of Sep-



tember. The meeting will take place at the Timber Creek Grill Buffet at 9211 East Montgomery Street, from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm. Please contact either Dennis or Sean at the restaurant at [REDACTED] to confirm your attendance by the 14th of September. Thanks to Hal Thornton (68-23) for setting this up.

I know it's just September, but it's not too early to mark your calendars for the Auburn Veterans Day Parade scheduled for the 9th of November. Please go to our website at [vhpawa.org](http://vhpawa.org) for more information on activities, meeting dates and times, past meeting recaps and to buy chapter hats, patches, shirts, pins and our new challenge coin. Finally, thanks to all our members who make our chapter a success. You are appreciated!

Don LeMaster, President

## 46th Special Forces CompanyContinued from Page 8

Most of our flights were within Thailand which was a very large AO. Thailand is the size of Texas. In-country destinations varied from Don Maung International Airport in Bangkok to NPK, or Udorn, or Pataya, or as far as Chang Mai in the extreme northwest. The 46thSF had a training facility in the western extremities of Thailand adjacent to the Burmese border, west of Konchenoburi. (the photo) of the bridge appearing on page 8 was taken near that location. While the movie depicted a tall bridge between outcrops of the river's high banks, the real bridge was much less dramatic. The movie location depicted a tall bridge between outcrops of the river's high banks, the real bridge was much less dramatic. The movie location was filmed about six miles upriver from the actual bridge. The real bridge did survive WWII, but several of its bridge spans were bombed out and later repaired. The bridge is still in use today. Parts of the jungle in that region of Thailand were still infested with WWII booby traps and ordinance left by the Japanese. From time to time we operated out of old Japanese airstrips where rusted airplane parts could still be found; nothing of value, just corroded stringers and firewalls or a prop blade.

From time to time our destinations were so isolated and remote that extra fuel was carried in barrels inside the aircraft to provide sufficient range to get the aircraft to a refueling point. Outlying SF locations usually maintained fuel stores to facilitate aircraft that would be flying in support of their mission. A manual hand pump was used to pump the fuel out of the barrels and into the aircraft. Usually, members of the crew took shifts to accomplish this task.

Aviators in the 46th had maps of the areas of operation which were published in 1957. This meant that each new aviator spent the first couple of weeks updating his personal map with a chart update manual drawing in cities, highways, dams, and airports that had been constructed

since the map was published. These maps became a very valuable tool and had to be safeguarded if it contained sensitive information about SF locations or activities.

Once a month, the entire company conducted para-drop proficiency training at Pawai Airfield. There were several types of drops that had to be conducted. The normal drop was from 1,500 feet agl, followed by a low-level drop over rough terrain. The low-level jumps frequently resulted in injuries. While the 46th had its own medical clinic at Ft Narai, injuries beyond their medical care capability would require an aircraft being diverted to the 5th Field Hospital in Bangkok.

The mission of the 46th Special Forces Company was complete in early 1974. The unit departed Thailand in April, 1974 infused into the 1st Special Forces, Ft Lewis. In the decades to come, Special Forces Support Aviation took on a greater role as a specialized aviation organization assigned to meet the ever changing needs of "Black Ops". These aviators have specialized training unique to SF operations, sophisticated helicopters, and much better equipment than their predecessors of the 1970s. And so it should be. I cannot imagine working with a better group of people. SF is an organization of committed, talented, and highly trained individuals who pull together as a team to get the mission accomplished. I am very proud to have served with them.

Information for this story was gathered from many sources including members of the 7th Airlift Platoon, and other SF soldiers. These individuals are part of the history of the 46thSF in their place and time, and they are very proud of it, as they should be. This is but a brief account of what took place during the years I served with them

William C. Thompson  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

All four of Bill's Books,  
The Afgan Deception, Tank Witch,  
Causal Connection and Toltancina  
are available at:  
[www.MyNovelTales.com](http://www.MyNovelTales.com)

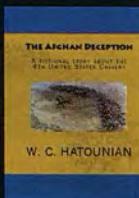


#### CAUSAL CONNECTION

Detective Milo Necalli, an energetic veteran investigator with the Phoenix Police Department's Night Detective Unit, is secretly delighted when he is assigned to investigate the death of a man who was found asphyxiated and shrink-wrapped inside an empty waterbed mattress.

#### THE AFGHAN DECEPTION

Colonel Martin Daniels and the 4th United States Cavalry are inadvertently thrust into the world of international politics and intrigue in this historical fiction novel set in 1879. The relationship between two colonels of cavalry, one American and one British, could forever alter the fate of the British Empire.



VHPA Member Bill Hatounian is a 24-year military veteran and a retired Army Aviator. He served with the 1st Squadron, 4th United States Cavalry in Vietnam and after active duty, he flew with the 997th AHC of the Arizona Army National Guard. He has recently retired from being both a pilot and a Lieutenant with the Phoenix Police Department and is enjoying retired life by writing books, being active and traveling with his wife.

# WANTED

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# The US Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio dedicates an exhibit to the HH-3 Jolly Green Giant, Search & Rescue units of the Vietnam War

*Editor's note – the following is the text of a speech given by Stuart Hoag to his local civic group about the new display in the US Air Force Museum of the HH-3, Jolly Green Giant helicopters that were used for search and rescue aircraft throughout the Vietnam War.*

Memorial Day talk May 2011 - On this Memorial Day, I feel honored and humbled to voice the appreciation we have for the sacrifices made by our military personnel, from all services in the defense of our great country. I also want to thank Joe for inviting me to speak today.

In March of 2010, U.S. and industrial officials joined personnel from the National Museum of the United States Air Force for the opening of the museum's new HH-3e "Jolly Green Giant" exhibit. On December 14, 2010, I was invited along with my wife and son to attend and participate in the dedication of the Jolly Green Helicopter on display.

The HH-3e rescue helicopters in Vietnam used the radio call sign Jolly Green followed by the mission number of the aircraft. The nick name was inspired by the green color of the big helicopter, thus we called it the Jolly Green Giant. The call sign was a natural and quickly took root, becoming an official radio call sign. To make the story more interesting early on the Jolly Green Giant vegetable company indorsed the use of the name.

Last year they were invited to the dedication and participate in it they did.

All HH-3e helicopters assigned to the 37th Air Rescue Squadron in Vietnam were assigned a Jolly Green call sign with a unique number and the helicopter put on display, tail number 67-14709 was Jolly Green 22. The Jolly Green prefix was synonymous with Search and Rescue activity and was always used during a search and rescue mission.

I served 12 months in the 37th Air Rescue Squadron and have 12 combat rescues of people pulled from the jungle. My first successful rescue mission added the 200th rescue for the squadron but that is not the reason I was invited to the HH-3e induction ceremony. Jolly Green 22 was selected because the museum personnel wanted a notable Jolly Green helicopter that had completed a memorable mission resulting in a crew member being awarded a highly rated medal. The selected helicopter also had to have an outstanding history with the squadron. Two months before I arrived in the squadron, a Congressional Medal of Honor was awarded to Captain Gerald Young, the only such medal earned in the squadron. The problem with selecting his helicopter and mission was that his helicopter was destroyed! The next medal to the Congressional Medal of Honor is the Air Force Cross; and the only available aircraft that met the museums criteria was Jolly Green 22 as it had flown a qualifying mission in March of 1968. I was the pilot and Aircraft Commander on that mission, and a member of my crew, Sgt Dennis Richardson, our crew chief that day was awarded the coveted Air Force Cross.

On that day in March of 1968, I was involved in an all day effort attempting to rescue two F-4C pilots who had bailed out into the jungle. My aircraft was but one of four Jolly Green helicopters, each with a crew of four. Many more fixed and rotary wing aircraft were involved during the day. Trying to make it reasonably safe for a pick up, both F-100 and F-4 jets strafed bad guys and enemy gun emplacements on the roads and hills of the valley. As the day wore on, a Marine helicopter gunship was shot down but the crew was rescued by another Jolly Green. At that time, if some one had prophetically told me not to forget the details of this all day mission because in 43 years I would be asked to re-live that long day - I would have laughed!



Chief Master Sgt. (Ret.) Dennis Richardson, who was an HH-3 flight engineer and Air Force Cross recipient, speaks during the opening of the HH-3 "Jolly Green Giant" exhibit at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force on Dec. 14, 2010. (U.S. Air Force photo)

The aircraft that I flew, of course, was Jolly Green 22, the one the Museum resurrected from the aircraft bone yard in Arizona, and the reason why I was asked to attend the dedication ceremonies. The museum completely restored it to airworthy standards, painted as it looked in 1968 when assigned to my squadron in Vietnam. It was a big improvement over the condition of the aircraft after I landed and shut it down at the end of that long day. That day it had 68 bullet holes, a shot out windshield, and holes through the rotor blades and engine exhaust pipe, most of the damage coming when I came to a 10' hover over the pilot's marker, a red nylon panel.

Unknown to us at the time, the enemy had captured the pilot, surrounded the rescue panel and waiting for one of us to try for a pickup. Gun fire erupted from all around me, causing most all the battle damage mentioned earlier. My keepsakes from that mission are the remains of my service cap that, when hit, filled the cockpit full of cotton fuzz, and a spent bullet removed from under my seat, stopped by the seats armor plate. Only by the grace of God was the aircraft able to escape a trap and keep flying and I am able to be here today to tell the story.

For the dedication, the Museum invited all the crew members, plus wives and children and other family members of all airmen who had flown missions in Jolly 22 plus those other crew members

involved in the mission of March 1968. Of my crew, only Sgt Richardson and I were present at the dedication ceremonies. I was the pilot and Sgt Richardson, recipient of the Air Force Cross and a Purple Heart, was my flight engineer. My copilot is deceased, and my Para Rescue crewmember was killed in action at a later date, on a later mission. Silver Stars were awarded to me and the rest of my crew for the mission that day.

Helicopter Jolly 22 served in combat for 32 months with the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at DaNang Air Base, South Vietnam. During this time, crewmen flying Jolly 22 were awarded one Air Force Cross, 14 Silver Stars, many Distinguished Flying Crosses and lots of Air Medals for heroism. Crews flying this aircraft also rescued 27 people during the war. Jolly Greens were only in the war for about five years and research indicates the Jolly Greens made over 800 combat saves during their time in Vietnam. As a note of interest: My squadron suffered 10 combat-related HH-3 Helicopters losses during the Vietnam War and four air crews were killed in combat; one of those crew members was a Coast Guard exchange pilot killed while assigned to my squadron.

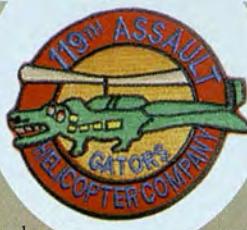
After the war, this helicopter was attached to rescue units at Osan Air Base, Korea, where it continued to be a part of notable achievements. While assigned to the 33d Aerospace Rescue Squadron, the Crew was credited with the night time saving of 28 Taiwanese sailors from a sinking ship in the Yellow Sea. For this action, the crew was awarded the prestigious MacKay Trophy.

If you get close to Dayton, Ohio, do not pass up the opportunity to tour the National Museum of the Air Force. It is a huge complex and it's free to all! It would take much more than a day to see it all properly but when you go, be sure to see the new South East Asia Pavilion where "my" helicopter is on display.

In closing I would say that today I told you a little part of one story from one old veteran. Every Veteran has their unique stories of their time in uniform, whether in a war zone or in another service or even if they served in a combat-support role. Today, I add my thanks to all of you who have served your country... Thanks for your service.

*Stewart Hoag*

# This is an account of the Mission in which WO1 Doug Mack, 2LT Patrick Calhoun, 1LT Josef Thorne, WO1 Daniel Bishop, & CPT Robert Walker, along with their brother aircrew members, lost their lives



*By Dean H Christensen, Murray Utah*

Doug Mack and I were room mates at Ft. Wolters, after finishing flight school (WORWAC 64-6W) we also traveled together from Travis AFB to Vietnam in November of 1964. A little bit of friendly cajoling with the assignments clerk in Saigon again traveling together up to Pleiku and our ultimate assignment, the 119th Airmobile Light Company (later re-designated the 119th Assault Helicopter Company).

The disastrous mission where my friend and all the others listed above lost their lives happened during Operation Quyet Thang (Vietnamese for Set Ones Mind on Victory), in LZ Alpha just north of Qui Nhon on 19 April 1965. It's been over 48 years since then, but that day still lives very vividly in my mind.

The mission briefing took place that morning and the crews were assigned chock numbers. This was the first gunship mission for Doug and myself as full time members of the armed platoon (Alligator Red, then re-named the Crocodiles). The Gun Platoon was under the command of CPT Lee Biggs and for this mission; CPT Bigg's pilot was CPT Robert Walker, who was also the Commander of the Signal Platoon. We were short a gunship in our platoon due to a maintenance problem, so one was temporarily assigned from the 145th Airlift Platoon for this mission. The 145th Aircraft Commander was 1LT Josef Thorne and the pilot was WO1 Daniel Bishop.

The aircraft were deployed for our flight, Fire Team 1 was the lead with CPT Biggs and CPT Walker, 1LT Thorne and WO1 Bishop flew on their wing. In our 2nd Fire Team that morning 1LT Jimmy Wilkie was the A/C and I was the pilot, 2LT Pat Calhoun and WO1 Doug Mack flew on our wing. After takeoff, we settled in on Bigg's wing and proceeded to the LZ and the assault area.

As we prepped the LZ for the combat assault, the entire flight came under extremely heavy fire. Suddenly the gunship on CPT Biggs wing (Thorne and Bishop) literally broke in half with the cockpit portion diving and the tail boom folding into the bottom side of the cockpit, the aircraft hit upside down on the rotor blades. There was no radio calls other than 1LT Wilkie alerting CPT Biggs about the disaster to his wingman.

As we swung around the LZ, I saw our wingman experience the same break-apart disaster that was suffered by the aircraft in front of us. Doug and Calhoun also fell into the LZ, exploding on contact. We were also hit, but our aircraft remained under control with nothing apparently wrong with the engine, or flight controls.

By this time the Air Assault was abandoned but CPT Biggs told us to pull up on his wing and cover him as he was going to make a low-level pass over the LZ with the hope of locating any survivors. As we dropped from the initial 500' and proceeded low-level over the LZ, CPT Biggs again came under heavy ground fire as he approached the two burning aircraft. It was at this point a single bullet came up thru

the lower chon bubble, missed the pedals, missed the cyclic, missed the Copilot's "Chicken Plate and vest" and struck CPT Walker through the groin and into the spine, killing him instantly (unknown at the time).

CPT Biggs immediately pulled up and turned south and since the two gunships in the LZ had exploded on impact with no survivors he headed back to Qui Nhon. We were ordered to stay with him as we had also been hit with unknown

results and CPT Biggs was hoping to get CPT Walker back to medical attention as soon as possible. Knowing how shot up they were, he didn't want to go down on the way to help all alone.

On the way back, our Crew Chief, SP4 Willie Fleetwood, hooked up on his monkey strap and went out on the left skid to check for any damage to our helicopter, he immediately reported that we had a hole in the tail boom, the size of a "basketball"! This turned out to be a slight exaggeration, but you could drop a softball thru the hole that was just inches behind the attaching bolts on the tail boom and just inches below the tail rotor control cables. Apparently the enemy in that LZ was using some type of large recoilless weapon, with hellacious accuracy.

CPT Biggs was given an expedited landing pad with medics standing by at the airfield at Qui Nhon. We made a running landing with fire trucks along side as we didn't want to stress the tail boom any more than necessary. We left our aircraft where it quit sliding for the maintenance personnel to move it to the hangers for inspection and repair. It was one hell of a day.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

Dean H Christensen  
Chief Warrant Officer Four, U.S. Army, Retired



# Reunion Scrapbook

## GOLD STAR FAMILY BREAKFAST - A CHANCE TO SHARE MEMORIES

The Vietnam War left its mark on all of us. For every casualty, lives were changed forever, on the battlefield and back at home. You'll never forget your friends who were lost - have you thought about telling that to their families?

Gold Star Families are family members of someone who was killed during a war. We are Gold Star Sisters, Brothers, Wives, Daughters, Sons, Mothers, Fathers, Cousins, Nieces and Nephews. We know that our loved ones had lives away from us - joys, hopes, tears and fears that were shared only with the fellow soldiers they left behind. But rarely do we ever get a chance to hear their stories.

As veterans, YOU can give us that most precious gift of learning not only how our loved one died, but more importantly, how they lived. The Gold Star Family Breakfast provides that opportunity.

About 150 people, including 18 family members of the fallen, attended the Gold Star Family Breakfast at the VHPA Reunion in San Francisco. Huge thanks to the VHPA, its leadership, and Reunion Chair Mike Law for his endless support; all of the sponsors whose generous contributions assisted with the cost; our hard-working and always cheerful VHPA headquarters staff; and staff at the Hilton for accommodating us so beautifully.

VHPA members Ernie Arzabal and Herschel Ryan were responsible for inviting several of the family members who attended to honor their loved one's memory - way to go, guys. You turned your remembrance of your fallen buddies into action, contacted their families and encouraged them to attend the reunion so they could experience firsthand the camaraderie that their loved ones experienced all those years ago.

"I loved meeting some of Stan's comrades. After the 46 years he has been gone, my heart is so full of love for him and my life so enriched by having him for that brief two and a half years of my young life," explained Diana Del Masso, who fell in love with the handsome PFC Stanley Uding of A/227 AHC at first sight. "I know how this uniting happened. It was Stan looking down and making sure I was okay."

Beverly Farnsworth, sister of Spc 5 Lee King, also with A/227 AHC, said it was a great honor to be with the helicopter pilots who flew with her brother.



"The reunion inspired me to get Lee's slides on a DVD (it's been 45 years!). Before I just kept putting it off, it was just too painful, and now I want to see them and hopefully share them with my new friends, who will be able to tell me about them."

Table by table, each Gold Star Family member introduced themselves and told us about the person they lost. For many, it was the first time they had been among helicopter veterans, the first time they had ever talked about what it was

like to love someone and lose them. There were funny stories, tears, smiles, even "aha moments" as fellow aviators discovered they carried memories of the same incidents.

For VHPA member John Boyer, this reunion was special because it was the first time he had attended a Gold Star Family Breakfast. Boyer, his wife Diana and his 85-pound German Shepherd service dog drove from their home in Pennsylvania to San Francisco to attend the reunion (very long drive!). He said, "It was worth it for me to share time and space with some of the only people in the world who lived the same experience and know how it feels. I was truly moved by what it meant to the family members present (and to the rest of us). Hopefully the event will grow and become recognized as perhaps the most meaningful thing we do at our reunions." John is already at work contacting families of comrades who were killed during his time in Vietnam, to tell them about the VHPA Reunion and invite them to the Gold Star Family Breakfast in Louisville. Have you thought about doing the same?

Remember there are many ways to locate families of the fallen: check the Cofelt Database for names, see if there are tributes on the Virtual Walls, check phone books, online searches, obituaries, school records, or ask the Family Contacts Committee for help. Email [REDACTED] call our chairman Gary Thewlis at [REDACTED] or visit <http://www.VirtualWall.org/contacts>.

Julie Kink  
sister of WO David Kink KIA 8-3-1969  
member of Family Contacts Committee  
Honorary VHPA Member #3  
[REDACTED]





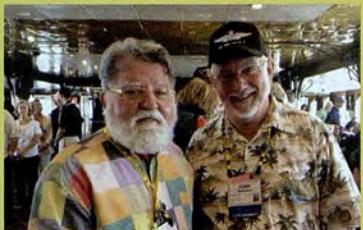
**"Bloody Hell, all we really need to have a great time at these Reunions is to have about three more trailers just like this one"**

*said a Member's Australian wife on her first visit to the MOC.*



**"Gee Dad, it's been 32 years and just now I think I finally know the real you"**  
*said a member's daughter after hearing her Dad join in the singing of three Vietnam Cav Songs in the MOC.*

## Why we go to these reunions!!



Howard Horton and Tony Zarbano share some time together on the Fireworks Cruise at this year's Reunion.

on a tour. I just happen to look at a name tag. Tony Zarbano, one of the guys I have tried unsuccessfully to find for years. After a handshake and a big hug, we made arrangements to meet later on the boat for the fireworks display. The last time I saw Tony was when he left the hooch to go home in 1969. It was a GREAT experience seeing him again!!

We caught up on who, what, when, where and we both promised to meet again next year in Louisville.

Howard D. Horton

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## One of the big stories of the 2013 Reunion...

One of the big stories of the 2013 Reunion was the return of the MOC (Mobile Officer's Club) to our Annual Reunion. With the full support of the Reunion Organizers and the outstanding cooperation of the Hilton Union Square Hotel, the MOC was up and operating for the first time in three Reunions. Shown here are some photos inside the MOC, CCN Member Joel Dozhier tends bar in the day photo, the night-time picture shows Mike Nord, Ken Fritz and Marcia Fritz enjoying a "frosty adult beverage" in the MOC that's now complete with a C-model tailpipe and doghouse hanging on her wall. The two quotes featured here were overheard at the MOC's Closing Banquet Post-Party.

There's serious consideration being given to taking the MOC to next year's Reunion in Louisville, Kentucky, but traveling all that way takes some serious bucks. If you would like to donate to the cause, contact Curt Knapp, the Secretary Treasurer of the CCN Chapter for full details, he may be reached either by phone at: [REDACTED]

or by e-mail at: [REDACTED]



# Reunion Scrapbook

The 30th Annual Reunion of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association wrapped up with our Closing Banquet on Saturday night, 6 July 2012. That night marked the closing to one of another successful Reunion as almost 1,500 Members and their guests join in the experience only San Francisco and the VHPA

can provide. Everyone in attendance would like to thank the Reunion organizing committee, Members of our HQ and Tour Event staff, several special volunteers and especially the members of the CCN (California Chapter North) of the VHPA for their tireless work in pulling together another outstanding Reunion.



Members and their guests enjoyed many inside the hotel events along with visiting several local attractions in the San Francisco area - shown are some scenes from our Annual Business Meeting, the HPF's, Unit Reunions, our Closing Banquet and our Spouse Events.

Also shown are some of the sights we saw during our outside of the hotel events among them were tours of San Francisco by both bus and trolley cars, a cruise on the San Francisco bay and a grand Fireworks Dinner Cruise the evening of the 4th of July.



# What took you so long?

by Chuck Ramsdell

Leslie and I walked into the lobby of the San Francisco Hilton Hotel after parking our car, which incidentally cost more than it did to purchase the first car we ever owned, and we immediately started people watching. There were about a hundred people in the lobby and of the hundred, twenty five were our age, they had grey hair, they were overweight and not necessarily in very good physical shape. Like us in many ways. But there was something about them that made us feel that we shared a common bond with them. They had a way of carrying themselves. They were a weathered, scared, a ridden hard and put away wet group. They had been work hardened but they had a tremendous enter strength that is not easily detected. They have experienced something that no one should ever have to experience. They have gone to war and come home to a divided country.

We moved up to the second floor to register for the Vietnam Veterans Pilot Association annual event. I went to the line labeled R-T. Mike Sheuerman found my packet, he said he remembered my name but I suspect he told everybody that. Mike not only got our packet but he interacted with three other volunteers to make sure I had everything in our packet, the correct tickets, maps and the correct size t-shirt. Mike also made sure we got to know everybody at the table. Mike then helped Leslie and I hook up our name tags and last he attached a label to the bottom of mine that said "first time attendee". After all that, Mike took us to a table and introduced us to another vet, to answer a question Mike wasn't sure of. If first impressions are important this was surely a favorable one. Later on Mike helped me to locate three flight school class mates and the aircraft commander of the Helicopter I was with when I was shot down. My eyes begin to water, tears came down my face. I couldn't talk. He said "take whatever time you need" I had the feeling he had seen this happen a hundred times before. It was a new experience for me, I hadn't heard from any of these people in over forty years. I now had a trail to go down to find them.

We ended up attending a few of the special events, The Bridge to Bridge boat trip on San Francisco Bay, was excellent. The Bob Hope reenactment Show, I liked but didn't do much for Leslie. Of the fifty offerings we attended a total of maybe eight. But every place we went we were made to feel welcome. All of the events were interesting and left us with some good information. The Northern California Chapter of VVPA brought a tractor trailer mobile Officer Club/Museum which they setup right on the street next to the Hilton Hotel. The museum part contained aircraft parts and information. It differed from other museums in that when you made a modest donation you were given a very strong gin and tonic or whatever drink you wanted.

Leslie and I were impressed by how well the event was organized and how friendly everybody was. Our only problem was we felt we needed more time to meet and get together with new friends and other attendees.

When Leslie and I were riding up the elevator, one of our fellow passengers asked us with a wink "what took you so long?", we ended up being asked the same question three more times during the weekend. Finely Leslie asked me, why did it take us over forty years to come to one of these Reunions? It will not happen again, we really enjoyed ourselves and are already looking forward to the next one.

Chuck Ramsdell

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

The majority of the photos shown here are courtesy of our Reunion photographer, Richard Carmer of Picture Phoenix ([www.picturephoenix.com](http://www.picturephoenix.com)). You can still order copies of all the pictures Richard took while he was with us at the Reunion. Other photographs are courtesy of Members Tom Payne, Jim Boykin and Kurt Knapp.



See you next year from 1 through 6 July,  
2014 in Louisville, Kentucky for the 31th  
Annual Reunion of the VHPA!

# The Story of Catherine Truc-Cam Nguyen, our singer at this year's Reunion Closing Banquet...

by VHPA Secretary/Treasurer Tom Payne

Attendees at this year's closing banquet were captivated by a 12-year old Vietnamese girl, Catherine Truc-Cam Nguyen, who opened the dinner with the singing of the National Anthem. Her heart-warming story begins with her Grandmother and Grandfather, Teresa and Paul Pham. You might say this is kind'a like what Paul Harvey used to call, "the rest of the story".

In early 1963, a young Vietnamese girl was hired by the 118th Aviation Company, AML to be a clerk/typist in Supply and Flight Operation sections of the "Thunderbirds", stationed at Bien Hoa AB, about 20 miles NE of Saigon. This young girl was very popular because of her huge smile and pleasant personality. She was quickly nicknamed "Miss Ha Ha", a play on her Vietnamese name, Ha. Miss Ha Ha did a very good job and was exceptionally fluent in both spoken and written English. Everyone liked her and she loved her job with the "Thunderbirds".

MAJ. George Owens assumed command of the 118th AHC in July of 1966, after our previous CO, MAJ. Robert Sauers was badly wounded and evac'd back home just two weeks into his command of the 118th. Faced with many overdue OERs and Operation Reports, MAJ Owens frantically looked for help to clear the backlog. Fortunately, he heard about Miss Ha Ha, the best typist in the unit. She was also gifted at both speaking and reading English. So, MAJ. Owens moved her up the Orderly Room and soon all the OER's and Operation Reports were accurately and precisely done. Miss Ha Ha quickly became an important part of the "Thunderbird" Orderly Room.

In 1969 Miss Ha Ha left the "Thunderbirds" to go to work for the USAF's 510th Fighter Squadron located on the other side of our runway. She later married Paul, a Vietnamese Army Officer and they remained in Vietnam after the fall of South Vietnam. Paul, being an officer in the S. Vietnamese Army, spent the next six years in Communist "re-education" camp. But in 1990, Miss Ha Ha and Paul and one daughter immigrated to the United States and settled in San Jose, CA. They began to experience the American dream and eventually, they all became U.S. Citizens.

Teresa (Miss Ha Ha)'s brother, Timothy Pham (a former ARVN 1st Lt.) who also had been living in the U.S. since he escaped in April of 1975 during "Operation Frequent Wind", found our "Thunderbird" web site ([www.118ahc.org](http://www.118ahc.org)), complete with Miss Ha Ha's photos when she worked for the "Thunderbirds" in Vietnam. Teresa spent many nights looking it and remembering the men she worked with in the "Thunderbirds". Timothy said that Miss Ha Ha was now living in San Jose, CA with her husband and family and he gave me her e-mail address and phone number so I could



The family of Catherine Truc (from left): Her father Quan Truc, her little sister Caroline Truc, her mother Jacqueline Truc, her Grandmother ("Miss Ha") Teresa Pham and finally, Catherine with her Grandfather Paul Pham.



Teresa ("Miss Ha"), on right, posing in front of the Thunderbirds orderly room back in 1963. Note the beautiful smile that she still carries to this day.

contact her. I was shocked!! Surely, this was a mistake, all this had happened about 45 years ago! Now skip several decades to 2010.

A few months before the VHPA's San Diego Reunion in 2010, I called Teresa and was very surprised to hear how excited she was to talk to someone from the 118th; she especially wanted to share remembrances about MAJ George Owens who had been our CO, her boss back in 1966, and asked if I could help. After a few minutes I knew I had to invite her to join us in San Diego. She and Paul came to the reunion and they were an immediate hit at our 118th AHC mini-reunion. Everyone was pleased to see her after some 40 years.

In early 2013 Teresa sent me e-mail with an attached video of her granddaughter, Catherine, singing the National Anthem at Candle Stick Park in San Francisco. The SF Giants were playing the LA Dodgers that day, one of the biggest games of the year. There were 42,000 fans and they cheered Catherine's singing of the National Anthem. She really was great and simply

beautiful in the video, I watched it over and over. How could someone so young be so talented and poised? I quickly forwarded the video to Mike Law, National Reunion Chairman and to each member of the Executive Council. In that e-mail I explained who Catherine was and what was her connection to our members and the VHPA. I also told everyone that I wished to invite her to sing the National Anthem at the Closing Banquet of our San Francisco Reunion. Everyone quickly agreed and I immediately invited Catherine and the rest of her family to join us. The rest is history. Catherine delighted the entire crowd with her stirring rendition of our National Anthem.

Catherine Truc-Cam Nguyen and all her family are now US Citizens. They all have "adopted" English first names: Teresa (Grandmother), Paul (Grandfather), Jacqueline (her Mom), Quan (her Father) and Caroline (her little sister).

Teresa and Paul both are retired from their jobs in the San Jose, CA area. Catherine sings not only at US sporting events, but for the local Vietnamese celebrations and Vietnamese theater productions. You can see her singing the National Anthem at the Giants game that night at: <http://youtube/8U6UPqd-z8w> Someday we may see her on TV or at some other big sporting event. If you do, now you will know, "the rest of the story" behind the little Vietnamese girl, Catherine Truc-Cam Nguyen!

Our Author, Tom Payne, served in the 118th AHC "Thunderbirds" from Aug 1966 till August 1967. He may be contacted at: [REDACTED]